THE PREFACE.

IN such an age as this, when the heat of vain and unprofitable controversies has bred more scriblers, than a hot summer (in the *Comedians* simile) does flies, it might seem more rational, according to *Solomons'* rule, for prudent men to keep silence, then to vex themselves and disquiet others with such empty discourses, as rather enlarge then compose the differences of Gods people. It was a sad age, that of *Domitian*, of which the Historian affirmeth, that then *Inertia pro sapientiâ erat*, Ignorance was the best knowledge, lazines and servility was the best diligence; and we could wish this age did not too much resemble that: But when we see every *Marsyas* with an old Pipe of *Minerva's*, dares contend with *Apollo*; that men of low and cheap abilities, are too loud and too hard for men of the choicest and best design, certainly *Inertia pro sapientia erit*, He's the best Orator that dwells in silence, and he's the wisest man, that keeps

Plautus.

Tacitus.

Appion. the privacy and recluſeneſs of his own ville. *Hannibal* once told *Scipio*, that it had been better both for *Rome* and *Carthage*, if both of them had been contented within their own bounds; and poſſibly it had been more honourable both for our brethren of the *Presbytery*, and our ſelves, had we made our liſts more private, and plaid our prizes onely behind the Curtains, for ſo we had confined and determined our ignorance to our own ſphear, and our defects had been viſible to no *Plutarch.* eyes but our own. But as *Antalcidas* objected to *Ageſilaus*, The *Spartans* have made the *Thebanes* fight whether they would or no; the exaſperations and bitterneſs of our brethren, have lent cowards courage, and pro- *Plinie.* vok'd us to combate whether we would or no; *Miſerum eſt pati nec licere queri*; 'Tis a hard caſe to be hurt, and to have our mouthes ſtopt; to ſuffer, and to be ob- *Seneca.* liged not to complain; *Qui unam patitur injuriam invitat aliam*; 'Tis a certain rule with the men of this perſwaſion. If you take a blow from them on one cheek, you cannot be Chriſtians in their Calender unleſs you turn the other alſo. We had well hoped, that what *Tully* notes to be the eloquence of *Atticus*, *Reſpondere ſciat me ſibi dum taceo*, our ſilence and our patience might have been good Orators for us to have anſwered the pretenſions of their power, the diſguiſes of their popular diſcourſes, and the harſh proceedings towards us but the more we ſuffered, they triumphed the more; and becauſe it was our judgement and choice to dwell in ſilence; they thought we either could not or durſt not ſpeak. But *nemo nobis amicis uti poteſt & Adulatoribus.* They ſhall find we are their friends, but not their Paraſites; we will ſpeak that truth which we under-

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ſtand, beſeech the good ſpirit to lead them and us into all truth; and in this mean and inconſiderable ſervice, we appeal to the 1000 witneſſes within us, that we ſpeak nothing out of pride or envy, or with unchriſtian reflections upon our ſufferings; but with a hearty deſire of peace, that they or we may be convinc'd, and at laſt meet by a unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace.

We ſhall not preſent the Rooms and model of the whole houſe in the Porch, yet we ſhall preface a recitall of thoſe grievances, which made us open our mouthes in this diſcourſe, *Ne extorqueretur nobis cauſa Lucii Cottæ patrocinio*, leſt we might ſeem to fear the Giant of Presbytery, and to think it were onely that *Palladium* that would preſerve the City of God.

About 7 months ſince, the Claſſis of *Mancheſter* publiſht their Breviats or cenſures, againſt all that came not in to them for trial and examination, wherein they go to the high waies, and compel all to come in and give ſubmiſſion to their Government, by ſubjecting themſelves to examination by the Miniſters and Elders, not onely ſuch as may be ſuſpected to be ignorant or ſcandalous, but all, of all elevations, of all judgements, muſt come under the Inquiſition, not ſo much we fear to fit them for the Sacrament, as to teach them obedience, that they may know themſelves, as *Tiberius* ſaid of the Senate, that they are *homines ad ſervitutem nati*, to owe an obedience to their new Maſters, which they muſt pay under the grand penalties of ſuſpenſion and excommunication. *Tacitus.*

I anſwer to theſe, *Bruta fulmina*, we with all meekneſſe and humility ſent them one ſingle ſheet of paper, deſiring ſatisfaction in ſome things wherein our reaſon

and religion obliged us to be of a different judgement from them; This one ſheet they return'd in ſeven, an anſwer long enough, if it be ſound enough.

To ſatisfie us in our ſcruples, and in their proceedings, they pretend for what they do, both an Eccleſiaſtical and civil function, a Commiſſion from Chriſt and the State alſo: But that maxime of the ancient will here be found true Ἀνομίαν ἔχει πᾶσα ἀνθρωπία, Our own Lawes built upon paſſion and intereſt, are commonly lawleſſe; It is apparent to us, that their new Lights have no light from Antiquity or primitive forms; that their new Rules have no eſtabliſhment, either by the Lawes of the Chriſtan Church, or the Lawes of this Land. St. *Ierom* ſaid of *Origen*, That *ingenii ſui acumina putat eccleſiæ eſſe Sacramenta*, an imagination ſure of our Presbyters, that the *placita* of their own wills muſt paſs for civil and divine conſtitutions. We wonder that men pretending to Learning and Religion, ſhould not onely call in the Lord of truth to abett the phanſies of men, but ſhould alſo pretend to encouragement and Commiſſions from the State to ſecond their prevarications.

It hath pleaſed his Highneſs in his wiſdome and clemency, to ſecure all godly and peaceable men profeſſing Jeſus Chriſt, from thoſe Ordinances which the rigour of Presbytery had mounted againſt them; but where he gives the leaſt incouragement for this power uſurped by them, we find not; and therefore we think 'tis friendly advice, that they take heed leaſt their unguided zeal or intereſt precipitate them into a premunire, ſince under colour of Authority, they have made Lawes and Canons, and publiſhed them openly in the Church for

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all to obey upon pain of excommunication, not onely againſt all the ancient known Lawes of elder date, but alſo contrary to the preſent eſtabliſhment and the Magiſtracie under which we now live.

'Tis a trouble to us, to hear them cry out againſt Prelacy and Epiſcopacy, as onely an artificial and political device to Lord it over Gods inheritance, whereas indeed their little fingers are heavier then the Prelates loins; though they tell us their way is a friendly, meek, and ſocial way, we find it not; they make us onely as Publicans and Heathens; it ſhould ſeem that all that they intended in the change of Church-Government, was onely to ſlice the Dioceſan into Parochiall Biſhops; and with him in *Lucian*, To cut out the old uſeleſs Moons into fine new Stars, every one of which claim the ſame influence and dominion over the people which the Prelates did.

'Tis a trouble to us, to hear them inveigh againſt Hereticks, and Schiſmaticks, againſt the Novatian and Donatiſts of old, when they walk in their ſteps, maintaine their principles, and eſpouſe their quarrels. We are told by the Church Hiſtorians, That the doctrine againſt mixt-communion, was a brat begotten by *Novatus*, nurſt up by *Lucifer* and *Audius*, but it grew not till *Donatus* became its foſter-Father, then indeed it flouriſht and ſpread amain, till St. *Auſtin* by his judicious and clear oppoſition did baniſh it, that, and the ſubſequent Ages; the Anabaptiſts of the laſt age called it back into *Germany*, *Quod aruit in ſe reſloruit in illis*; they grafted upon the old ſtock, and wanted nothing of the *Donatiſts* but to be called ſo. Now amongſt other of their dangerous and

erroneous principles, *Bullinger* notes this for one of the chief, *De doctrinâ cœnæ ſcrupuloſe quærunt Anabaptiſtæ, quorum cauſâ cœna dominica ſit inſtituta.* They were nice and ſcrupulous, and inquiſitive concerning the Lords Supper, conluding it was only to be given to the Saints, and concluding the Saints to their own folds.

This is the direct practiſe of the Scottiſh and Engliſh Presbytery; becauſe the Parliamen: formerly, and now his Highneſs, in their wiſdom and prudence have ſo blunted the edge of their ſecular power, that they cannot hurt us with that, they fly to their religious ſhifts, and what *David* ſaid of *Goliah*'s ſword, ſurely they ſay of the holy Sacrament, *There's none like unto that*; no engine ſo likely to teach us obedience, and to give them the ſoveraignty as that. They impale the ſupper of Chriſt to their own incloſures, and as abſolute Judges of all communicants, keep back all perſons that have not their Shiboleth ready, that will not fall down and worſhip that Idol which they have ſet up. The *Ægyptians* were hard Taskmaſters, to expect the children of Iſrael ſhould make Bricks, and make ſtraw too, to require the ſame number of bricks without materials to make them of: this is ſomething like the ſeverity of our new Maſters, they cenſure for not doing that which they render to us impoſſible: If we come not to the Lords Supper, we muſt be excommunicate; and they will not permit us to come, becauſe we are ignorant, or ſcandalous, or prophane; and 'tis proof enough we are ſo, becauſe we are too ſtout to fall down and worſhip their imaginations.

Tis a trouble to us, that men who impropriate to themſelves the name of Saints, and would have the world

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to think them the onely Christians, should be so far from that ὁπείκεια ἐυαγγελίας, that meeknes and sweetnesse of the Gospel, that they are still of the old legall spirit, to eradicate and destroy all that are not of their way: Instead of sweetning and indearing the spirits of men, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, they irritate and imbitter them by their two bold judging in private, and by their fierce and severe censures in publick, as if indeed it were their work to deliver them up unto Satan.

These things have forc'd us contrary to our own dispositions and inclinations, to appear in publick, not only for our own vindication, but in defence of Ecclesiastical and civil constitutions, well hoping that these mean indeavours will encourage some worthy and learned Champions to take up Arms for the defence of that cause which we love: what we have done, *quale quale sit*, what ever it be, inasmuch as in the sincerity of our hearts we profess 'tis done, *sine ullo studio contentionis*, without any pleasure or delight in contention, but onely for the love of truth, we hope our good God will give it a more gracious success, and good men will give it a more charitable reception.

Errata sic Corrigenda.

PAge 81. line 25. for whereas, read whereat. p. 82 l. 2 these, r. those. p. 83 l. 10 Answer as it is to, r. Answer it is to be. ibid. l. 16 pray, r. pay. p. 84 l. 32 See, r. So. p. 85 l. unaninous, r. unanimous. p. 87 l. 24 referring, r. restoring. p. 88 l. 13. examination, r. excommunication. In the Preface, p. 3. l. 30. for I, r. In.

S BA 39

At the first Classe at Manchester *Septem.* 8th 1657.

IN pursuance of an Order of the last Provincial, the first Classe doth humbly represent to this Assembly their apprehensions in the case to them propounded in a draught prepared for the several Congregations belonging to their own Association, if it shall be approved of by this Assembly, and which they do wholely submit to their Judgments.

It being represented to this Classe, and much complained of, and offence being taken, That in the several Congregations, (if not all) belonging to the Association, there are many persons of all sorts, that are members of Congregations, and publickly enjoy several priviledges; as, the hearing of the Word, prayers of the Church, and baptizing of their children, and satisfaction for injuries done unto them, That yet live in a total and sinfull neglect of the Lords Supper, that are scandalous and offensive in their lives, drunkards, unclean persons, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, neglecters of Family-duties, that will not subject themselves to the present government of the Church, but live as lawless persons, out of their rank and order, and there are sundry that are grosly ignorant in the main points of Christian Religion. These are to give notice, that this Classe, lay-

ing theſe things to heart, and much grieved for them, do publiſh and make knoivn;

1. That every Miniſter belonging to this Aſſociation, ſhall ſet apart one or two dayes, or more of the week dayes, in every moneth, for the catechizing of the ſeveral families belonging to their reſpective Congregations; and for the information of the ignorant in thoſe families, and that the families to be catechized on each of ſuch dayes, ſet apart for that purpoſe, have notice the Lords day before, to meet the Miniſters either at the Church or Chappel, or the Miniſters houſe, or ſome other houſe within the Congregation, that may be convenient for the neighboring families to meet at, that ſhall be appointed for ſuch a day, as may be judged meeteſt by the ſeveral Miniſters.

2. That notice ſhall be taken of all perſons that forſake the publick Aſſemblies of the Saints, and conſtantly turn their backs of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

3. That like notice ſhall be taken of all ſcandalous perſons.

4. That they ſhall be privately admoniſhed, according to the order preſcribed by Chriſt, *Mat.* 18. once or twice, to ſee if they will reform; and that the Miniſter, when hee catechizeth the ſeveral families, ſhall exhort ſuch perſons in them as hee findes to be of a competent knowledg, and are blameleſſe in life, that they preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, that they may be admitted to the Lords Supper.

5. That if they will neither hearken to private admonition, nor admonition of the Elderſhip, their names ſhall be publiſhed openly in the ſeveral Congregations, and they warned before all to reform.

6. That if after all this they ſhall continue obſtinate, they ſhall be caſt out, and excommunicated.

Theſe things this Claſſe thought fit to give publick notice of, being very ſenſible, that, for the want of the vigorous exerciſe of Church diſcipline, ignorance, Atheiſm, and licentiouſneſſe grows upon us, to the great diſhonor of God, ſcandal of Religion, the hazzard and undoing of many pretious ſouls, and the

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laying a blot on ſeveral Congregations; and therefore they are reſolved, (ſeeing themſelves neceſſitated, to this ſeverity of diſcipline, for the freeing themſelves from the great guilt of neglect of their own duty, that otherwiſe they ſhall be under) to make uſe of that power that Chriſt hath committed to them, for edification, and not for deſtruction; although it would be their farr greater joy, that there might not be occaſion of uſing ſharpneſſe: and therefore they do earneſtly in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt beſeech all thoſe that are ignorant, that they would apply themſelves diligently to the uſe of all publick and private means for their information, ſubmitting themſelves with all readineſſe to be inſtructed; and to conſider, that without knowledg the minde cannot be good: and they do alſo in the name of Jeſus Chriſt exhort and warn all ſuch as live ſcandalouſly, and in the practice of open ſins, that they break off their iniquities by repentance, and turn unto God ſpeedily with their whole heart, that they neither incurr the cenſure of being caſt out of the Church here, nor by continuing in their ſinfull courſe, be kept for ever entering into the kingdome of Heaven hereafter.

And touching ſuch as turn their backs of the Lords Supper conſtantly, this Claſſe doth wiſh them ſeriouſly, to conſider what an account they will be able to give unto Jeſus Chriſt, for their living in the dayly neglect of an ordinance that is ſo exceeding neceſſary for their own comfort and growth in grace; and that they would lay aſide all prejudice, whatever it is that hinders, and ſubmit themſelves unto wholeſom doctrine, for their own good, as this Claſſe hath been ready on their part to expreſſe all tenderneſſe toward the weak, and a willingneſſe to condeſcend to the meaneſt, for the removing all occaſions of ſtumbling, ſo farr as lies in their power. And yet, conſidering the fearfull danger that all ſuch do lay themſelves open unto, that ſhall eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Lord unworthily, they do warn whoſoever comes to the Lords Table, to take ſpecial care ſo often as they come, to examine themſelves, leſt they eat and drink their own damnation.

But becauſe the exerciſe of Church diſcipline muſt begin at private perſons, and that if they neglect their duty of watching

over, and admoniſhing one another, and bringing complaints to the Elderſhip as there is occaſion, little or nothing can be done for the thorow reformation of the ſeveral Congregations; this Claſſe doth therefore warn all and every of the members belonging unto them, to conſider the great guilt they will lye under, if they through their neglect, obſtruct ſo needfull and neceſſary a work, and doth expect therefore in all faithfulneſſe, laying aſide all partiality, ſlaviſhneſſe, and ſelf-reſpects, they ſhould addreſſe themſelves to the diſcharge of their duties, that if any walk diſorderly, and will not be reclaimed by private admonition, they making complaint thereof to the Elderſhip, courſe may be taken for excommunicating of the obſtinate, and thereby purging out the old leven, to the glory of God, the delivering their own ſouls from that guilt they will otherwiſe lye under, the preſerving the Ordinances from prophanation, and the reſt of the lump from being levened, the ſtopping of the mouthes of ſuch as ſeek occaſion againſt us, and finally the everlaſting welfare and ſalvation of the ſouls of thoſe that go aſtray.

By the Provincial Aſſembly at Preſton, *Octob. 6.* 1657.

RICHARD HEYRICKE
Moderator *pro tempore.*

This Preſentation is approved by the Provincial Aſſembly,

THOMAS JOHNSON, Moderator.

EDWARD GEE, Scribe.

To the Elderſhip of the ſeverall congregations belonging to the Aſſociation of the Firſt Claſſe at Mancheſter, *within the Province of* Lancaſter; *Theſe.*

Give us leave to ſalute you, in your own Terms.

WE have ſeen and ſeriouſly weighed that paper draught, Intituled *A preſentation of the firſt Claſſe at* Mancheſter, *dated the* 8. *of Sept.* 1657. confirmed by the Provincial Aſſembly at *Preſton*, *Octob.* 6. and publiſhed at *Mancheſter* Church the 22. of *Nov.* in the aforeſaid year: and do publiſh this our ſenſe, and Apprehenſion of it, as far as is plain to us, not reſting in the Judgement and determination of any General Council contrary thereunto (if any ſuch ſhould be) much leſs to one of your Provincial Aſſemblies; Though you ſeem to ſubmit to your Provincial, what you will hardly grant to a General Council: In which we diſſent from you; Though in other things we ſhall joyn, as firſt.

1. We joyn with you, in a deep ſenſe of the ſeverall groſs ſins and errours of the times, deſiring earneſtly to mourn, firſt for our own, next for the ſins of others of our Chriſtian Brethren, and fellow members of that Church, whereof Chriſt is the Head: We are grieved together with you, for the Scandalous and offenſive lives of ſuch as live in drunkeneſs, uncleaneſs, ſwearing, prophanation of the Sabbath, *&c.*

2. We are alſo ſenſible with you, that there are ſundry perſons, groſſely ignorant, in the main points of Chriſtian Religion.

3. You with us again (we hope) are ſenſible and grieved (though you do not at all mention them) for the groſs errours

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in judgement, and the damnable Doctrine of many, who have rent themselves into as many severall heresies, as they have into Sects and Schismes.

Thus far we agree, nay more, touching the way of informing the ignorant, and reforming the wicked and erroneous, we shall not much dissent.

1. *And first for the information and instruction of the ignorant, by way of Catechizing, before they be admitted to the Sacrament*; The course by you published (provided it be in publique) little differeth from the order prescribed by the Church of *England*, and other reformed Churches abroad, before any be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords supper.

2. *For those who erre so grossely, whether in Doctrinals, or points of discipline, thereby renting from a true constituted Church:* Though you speak nothing either of their sin or punishment, yet we hope, you with us do hold, That the Churches lawfull Pastors, have the power of the Keys committed to them, to excommunicate such offenders.

3. *For such as are scandalous and wicked in their lives*; Admonition, private and publique, is to be observed according to Christs rule *Mat.* 18. but if they still continue, and will not reform, the Churches lawfull Pastors have power to excommunicate such.

Thus far we accord in judgement, touching the way of informing the ignorant, and reforming wicked persons, and schismatical; which course is so fully warranted by the Word of God, and the constant practise of the Catholique Church, that we are not so wavering and unsettled in our apprehensions of the case, as to submit either it or them, either wholly or in part, to the contrary judgement and determination of a General Council of the Eastern or Western Churches; much less, to a new termed Provincial Assembly at *Preston*, wherein we no little differ from you.

Other parts of your Paper are full of darkness, to which we cannot so fully assent, till further explicated and unfolded by you. For,

1. Whereas you say, *That in the several congregations (if not in all) belonging to this Association, there are many persons of all*

all ſorts that are members of congregations, &c. you ſeem to hint, that though your grief may be general (as ours) for all offenders, yet your cenſures extend onely to thoſe who have admitted themſelves members of ſome Congregation within your Aſſociation, and yet live inordinately, and will not be admoniſhed: If ſo, then we who never were any members or aſſociates of yours, are not within the verge and compaſs of your Presbyterian diſcipline; for what have you to do to judge thoſe that are without?

2. But whereas your complaint, and offence taken, is, *That many there are of all ſorts, who will not ſubmit themſelves to the preſent Government of the Church, but live like lawleſs perſons out of their rank and order.*

If by the preſent Government of the Church, you mean your own (as may ſtrongly be conjectured you do) then are we alſo comprehended therein, and muſt fall within your cenſure, and not onely we, but all Papiſts, Anabaptiſts, and all other, of what Profeſſion, and Religion ſoever, who live within the Pariſh, muſt be taken for members of ſome one Congregation within your Aſſociation, and ſo driven into the common fold of Presbytery, and be ſubject to your Government: And this (as we ſuppoſe) is the cheif deſign of you, in this, as in other tranſactions of yours, to ſubject all to your Government, which you garniſh over with the ſpecious title, of *Chriſts Government*, *Throne*, and *Scepter*. Presbytery is the main thing driven at here; and however ſhe cometh uſhered in with a Godly pretence of ſorrow, for the ſins and ignorance of the times, and a duty incumbent upon you, to exerciſe the power which Chriſt hath committed to you, for edification, and not for deſtruction; yet theſe are but as ſo many waſte papers wher in Presbyterie is wrapped, to make it look more handſomely, and paſs more currently; but beware we muſt, for *latet anguis in Herbâ*.

Object. But you ſay, *For want of the vigorous exerciſe of this Eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, ignorance, Atheiſm, and Licentiouſneſs grows upon us, and men live as lawleſſe perſons, out of their rank and order, becauſe not ſubject to your preſent Government.*

Sol. We pray for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch Church Govern-

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ment, throughout his Highneſs Dominions, as is conſonant to the will of God, and Univerſall practice of primitive Churches, that Eccleſiaſticall diſcipline may be exerciſed, in the hands of them, to whom it was committed by Chriſt, and left by him, to be transferred from hand to hand to the end of the World; and ſhall readily joyn with you in humble addreſſes, to his Highneſs, and his great Council, for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch a Church Government.

In the mean time though there may be ſuch, who (as you ſay) live as lawleſs perſons, out of their rank and order, yet are they ſubject to law, and therefore ſubject to puniſhment, for though your Eccleſiaſtical ſword cannot take hold on them, the civill ſword doth reach them.

Your Claſs may do well then not to contemn (as in charity we hope you do not) the authority of the civill Magiſtrate, but inſtead of warning all and every member belonging to them, to complain to the Elderſhip, of thoſe that walk diſorderly, and will not be reclaimed, to the end they may excommunicate them, That they exhort them to complain to the civill Magiſtrate, whoſe ſword of Juſtice is ſharper and longer, and likely to work a greater reformation in the lives, and manners of men, by a corporal and pecuniary Mulct, then any ſword of excommunication or other Church cenſure your Elderſhip can any way pretend unto;

There are other parts of your paper do remain likewiſe dark, which we deſire may be made plain unto us; for whereas you ſay,

There are many perſons of all ſorts, &c. *That will not ſubmit themſelves to the preſent Government of the Church, but live as lawleſs perſons, out of their rank and order:* Our Quæres thereupon are;

1. Why Government *in ſingulari*? is there no Eccleſiaſticall Government but yours? may not another Church have its Government different from yours, yet not different from that which Chriſt hath preſcribed in his Word? *Calvin* ſaith, yea; *Scimus enim unicuique Eccleſiæ*, &c. And accordingly there are other Churches in *England* different in Government from yours, and as good as yours.

But

But if you say yours is the Government, (καθ' ἐξοχὴν) by way of eminency, as Christs own Government more immediatly, and *jure divino*, which you so much defend, then why (the present) is there no present Government in any Church or Assembly of Saints, but where your discipline is erected? Are all the rest at present without Government? or where hath yours been this 1500. years past till this present? Hath *Antichristianism* so overspread the face of the Church that Christs own Government could never get footing till this present? But now subjection is required thereto of all, yet many of all sorts will not subject, but live as lawless persons, out of their rank and order.

Our next Quære is;

What? must all those that observe not your ranks and orders, subject not themselves to your present Government, be taken for lawless persons, out of their rank and order? Yea; for so this close connexion of yours seems to import, *(viz.) many who do not subject but live*, &c.

In your paper you further proceed, and make it an order, *That notice shall be taken of all persons, that forsake the publick assembly of Saints.*

We would gladly know how far you extend this Saintship, this Church and assembly of Saints, if to your own Church onely, and such as subject themselves to your Government; then S. *Augustines* Answer against the *Donatists*, who would not acknowledg a Church in the World but amongst themselves, may also be yours, *O Impudentem Vocem!* (saith he) *Illa non est, Quia tu in illa non es: Vide nè tu ideo non sis, nam illa erit etsi tu non sis.*

But if your charity reach further, then to your own assemblies, then you make lawless persons, such as will not subject themselves to your Government, Saints, and members at least of the invisible Triumphant Church, though none of your present visible militant Church; and then your charity over reacheth.

Again, we are unsatisfied in the Word (*Publique*) *the publique assemblies of the Saints*, What? do not private assem-

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blies pleaſe you? We preſume you are not againſt private meetings, your own practice ſpeaks the contrary: But you will binde all (notwithſtanding your private Aſſemblies) to frequent your publique alſo, other wayes they ſhall be taken notice of: What? though they cannot ſubmit to your Government? Leave you no room for tender conſciences? The Laws of the Land have otherwayes provided: And if you, under color of authority, will make Laws and Edicts, and publiſh them openly in the Church, for all to obey, upon pain of excommunication, contrary to the Laws in force, whether you do it in contempt of the civill power, or through ignorance of the Laws; which later is rather to be ſuppoſed, in a charitable and favourable conſtruction; yet in what ſenſe ſoever it be taken, we much queſtion, and it concerns you to look to it, whether you have not run your ſelves into a *præmunire*.

Again, whereas you ſay, *That like notice ſhall be taken of all ſcandalous perſons.* Our next Quære is; Whether thoſe that forſake the publique Aſſemblies of Saints in the 2d order, may not be taken for ſcandalous, and ſo comprehended in this 3d. If ſo, *Quare oneramini ritibus*? why do you lengthen out your paper, and burden us with traditions, in multiplying of orders *ſine neceſſitate ad Arthritim uſque*?

After the 2d and 3d orders againſt thoſe that forſake the publique Aſſemblies of Saints, and ſuch as are ſcandalous, comes in a fourth, touching the *Catechumeniſts* in the firſt order mentioned; (*viz.*) *That the Miniſter when he Catechizeth the ſeverall Families, ſhall exhort ſuch perſons in them as he findes, be of competent knowledge, and are blameleſs in life, that they preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, that they may be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord ſupper:* But what if they will not preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip? *The Miniſter muſt exhort and admoniſh them.* What if ſtill they refuſe? *Their names ſhall be publiſhed openly in the ſeveral congregations, and they warned before all to reform.* That's the 5th. order. Mark! Men of blameleſs life and knowledge muſt be warned before all to reform.

But what if after all this they will not reform, but continue obſtinate? *Then no admiſſion to the Sacrament*; that's implyed

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in the fourth order; There's their *Excommunicatio minor*: But that's not all, a higher cenſure yet; *They ſhall be caſt out, and excommunicated*; So ſaith the 6th and laſt order, the great Excommunication, which caſteth out of the Church alſo, and judgeth them no better, then Heathens, and Publicans, notwithſtanding all their piety and knowledge.

So that, in brief, all wilfully ignorant and Scandalous are to be excommunicated; and not onely they, but the knowing, and blameleſs of life, if they preſent not themſelves to the Elderſhip. Theſe things premiſed, lying ſadly on our ſpirits and conſciences, as not ſound and orthodox, for which we cannot ſo readily joyn with you, till further ſatisfaction be given us, and which the publiſher of your Paper promiſed ſhould be given to all that did deſire, We therefore thought fit to ſignifie theſe our ſcruples to you, and ſhall wait earneſtly for a ſpeedy ſatisfaction in the particulars, remaining

Your Brethren *deſirous of Truth, Unity and Peace in the Church.*

Iſaac Allen.
Jo: Pollett.
Tho: Preſtwich.
Leonard Egerton.
Ferdinando Stanley.
&c.

At *Mancheſter*, Feb. 23. 1657.

The Anſwer of the Firſt Claſsis within the Province of Lancaſter, *unto a Paper preſented unto them at their Claſsical meeting,* Jan. 12. 1657. *by certain Gentlemen, ſubſcribed by them and ſundry others within the bounds of this Aſſociation.*

Gentlemen,

WEE have peruſed your Paper, and do finde in it ſundry miſtakes, and ſome manifeſt wreſtings of our plain meaning, in that Paper of ours, which was publiſhed in our ſeveral Congregations: And wee are alſo ſenſible of the ſharp reflections in it, upon the Government, that is committed to our mannagement, and on our ſelves. But wee ſhall not go about to anſwer you in that kinde: and therefore laying aſide animoſities, and putting away gall and bitterneſſe, in the ſpirit of love and meekneſſe, however in faithfulneſſe and plainneſſe, wee ſhall endeavor to ſhew you your Errors and rectifie your miſtakes. And wee do thus farr acknowledg your fair dealing, (for which wee give you hearty thanks) that you addreſſe your ſelves unto us, giving us thereby the opportunity, both to vindicate our ſelves, and give you a right underſtanding of the maters wherein you are miſtaken.

Our leaſure will not permit us to ſpend time about impertinencies;

nencies; but yet, that you may not conceive wee are deſtitute of Civil Authority, (which you in your Paper minde us not to contemn, and wee our ſelves do profeſſedly teſtifie all due reſpects unto, as in duty wee are bound) wee intreat you to take notice, That the Lords and Commons aſſembled in Parliament having reſolved to eſtabliſh the Presbyterian Government throughout the Kingdom of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*, did *Auguſt* 19. 1645. publiſh their directions, after advice had with the Aſſembly of Divines, for the electing and chuſing of ruling Elders in all the Congregations, and in the Claſſical Aſſemblies for the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, and the ſeveral Counties of the Kingdom, for the ſpeedy ſettling of the Presbyterian Government. In theſe directions, (as may be ſeen *pag.*8.) they did ordain, *That in the ſeveral Counties certain perſons, Miniſters and others, ſhould be appointed by authority of Parliament, who ſhould conſider, how the ſeveral Counties reſpectively might be moſt conveniently divided into diſtinct Claſſical Presbyteries; and what Miniſters and others were fit to be of each Claſſis. And that they ſhould accordingly make ſuch diviſion and nomination of perſons for each Claſſical Presbytery. Which diviſions, and perſons ſo named for every diviſion, the appointed ſhould be certified up to the Parliament.* And they further appointed, *That the ſaid ſeveral Claſſes reſpectively being approved by Parliament, within their ſeveral precincts ſhould have power to conſtitute Congregational Elderſhips.*

According to theſe directions, the perſons by them appointed for this County met, and did conſider, how it might be moſt conveniently divided into diſtinct Claſſical Presbyteries, and what Miniſters and others were fit to be of each Claſſis: and alſo made ſuch a diviſion and nomination accordingly, and certified the ſame up to the Parliament; All which being done according to their directions and appointment, It was reſolved by the Lords and Commons aſſembled in Parliament, *Oct.*2.1646. *That they did approve of the diviſion of the County of* Lancaſter *into nine Claſſical Presbyteries repreſented from the ſaid County.* And it was further reſolved, *That the ſaid Houſes did approve of the Miniſters and other perſons repreſented from the County of* Lancaſter, *as fit to be of the ſeveral and reſpective Claſſes, into*

which

which the ſaid County was divided. Which diviſion of this County into nine Claſſical Presbyteries, and the approval thereof by the ſaid Lords and Commons was forthwith printed and publiſhed. In this diviſion ſo made and approved, *The firſt Claſſis is to contain* Manchester *Pariſh*, Preſtwich *Pariſh*, Oldham *Pariſh*, Flixton *Pariſh*, Eccles *Pariſh, and* Aſhton *under-line Pariſh*, as by what was then printed, and is yet extant, is to be ſeen. Further, wee wiſh you to take notice, That in your forementioned Directions *pag.* 3. *Direction* 6. it is there thus ordained, *That all Pariſhes and places whatſoever (as well priviledged places and exempt Juriſdictions, as others) be brought under the government of Congregational, Claſſical, and National Aſſemblies. Provided, that the Chappels or places in the houſes of the Peers of this Realm ſhould continue free for the exerciſe of Divine Duties, to be performed according to the Directory.* And alſo, that it was ordered by the Lords and Commons aſſembled in Parliament, *Decemb.* 21. 1646. *That the ſeveral Claſſes in* Lancaſhire *ſhould be one Province*; As appears by their Order to that purpoſe. As there is alſo another Order of theirs of *Octob.* 16. 1648. enabling the ſeveral Claſſes within this Province to ſend their Delegates to meet in a Provincial Aſſembly in *Preſton*, and appointing the time of their firſt meeting; the number of the Delegates, that were to be ſent to the ſaid Aſſembly; and the *Quorum* of the Aſſembly, according to the proviſion that had been made before by the Parliament, before any Provincial Aſſembly could by virtue of their Authority be enabled to act Provincially. By which account thus given it is manifeſt, That the ſetting up the Presbyterian Government in this County: The diviſion of it into ſeveral Claſſes: The making of thoſe Claſſes into a Province, and their Acting Provincially: As alſo the appointing this Claſſis to be the firſt, (that is, the firſt in regard of the number onely, the account beginning here) was all done by Authority of Parliament. And that, when wee call our ſelves the firſt Claſſis within the Province of *Lancaſter*, wee are awarranted thereto by authority of Parliament. And ſo your *Saluting us in our own terms*, (which wee gave not to our ſelves, till the Parliament had firſt given them to us) will not ſeem ſtrange to them, that then did,

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or now do, acknowledg that Authority and Power, which the Parliament exerciſed in thoſe times. Eſpecially conſidering there was nothing done ſince, either by that Parliament or any other, or by his Highneſſe and the laſt Parliament, that takes from us what was then granted, and as wee ſhall clear further anon.

In your Preface to what in your Paper you have to ſay unto us, there is in the firſt place a miſtake of that title, which was given by us unto ours; (which you call a Paper draught) for it was not by us intituled a Preſentation (as you call it) but a *Draught, that repreſented to the Provincial Aſſembly our apprehenſions in a caſe by them propounded unto us*; And was approved by the Provincial, under the Title of a *Repreſentation*. But this perhaps was but the miſtake of the Scribe, and wee inſiſt not on it.

It is of greater weight and moment, to take notice of what you publiſh as your ſenſe and apprehenſions of it, (not reſting in the judgment or determination of any general Council contrary thereunto) if any ſuch ſhould be, much leſſe to one of our Provincial Aſſemblies. Although you tell us, wee ſeem to ſubmit to our Provincial, what wee will hardly grant to a general Council; in which you profeſſe to differ from us.

Wee know very well, and have learned better from the Scriptures, then to reſolve our Faith into the determination of any company of men on Earth whatſoever, or to build our Faith on the Judgment of Synods, Provincial or National; or of General Councils, that have been heretofore, or that may be hereafter. Wee are ſure all men are fallible; and Faith, that is a ſure and certain grace, muſt have a ſure and certain Foundation, which is onely the infallible and written Word of God. And if this onely be your meaning, you have not us differing from you. But yet when wee conſider, That Synods and Councils, rightly conſtituted and regularly called, as they may be then of great uſe for light and guidance, ſo alſo that they are the Ordinance of God, and by him inveſted with authority, and ſo have an authoritative Judgment belonging to them, and which is not in private perſons, wee dare not contemn them, nor ſpeak ſlightly of them.

them. And seeing the higher Assemblies have greater Authority then the lower, (as there is more power in the whole, then in the part; in the whole body, then in any one, or some members) and that, however wee are well enough satisfied, that wee have the Authority of a Classe, yet wee are under the Authority of the Provincial Assembly; Wee see not wherein wee offended, that wee submitted our apprehensions, in the Case propounded by that Assembly unto us, unto their Judgment. There is concerning matters of Religion *Judicium Privatum*, or *a Private Judgment*; and this belongs to all Christians, who are to see with their own eyes, and judge, concerning what is necessary for them to know and believe in matters of this nature. This Judgment, as there is good reason why wee should allow it to our selves, so wee should Lord it over mens consciences, if wee should deny it to any. There is also *Judicium Publicum & Authoritativum*, *A Publick and an Authoritative Judgment*; and this is either Concional, which belongs to every lawfull Minister (to whom the Key of Doctrine is committed) by himself singly: or else it is Juridical, and this belongs to Synods and Councils, who having the Key of Discipline, are invested with authority to inquire into, try, examine, censure and judg of matters of Doctrine and Discipline authoritatively, (although they be tyed to the rule of Gods Word in such proceedings, as Judges to the Law) & likewise to censure offenders according to their merit, when such cases are regularly and orderly brought before them. And in this sense it was, that we submitted our apprehensions in the Paper published to the Judgment of the Provincial Assembly. And we believe, when the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 14. 32. *That the spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets:* And our Saviour Christ saith, Mat. 18. *Tell the Church.* And when wee consider, what was practised by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and certain others (who, upon occasion of a contest that arose in the Church at *Antioch* about a matter of Doctrine, were sent up from that Church to *Jerusalem* to the Apostles and Elders about that question) from these and other Scriptural grounds wee had sufficient ground for so doing. Wee are sure also, That *Whitaker de Conciliis quæstione quintâ*, and *Chamierus* in his *Panstratiâ de œcumenico Pontifice, ubi de Authoritate*

thoritate Papæ in Eccleſiâ, cap. 13. *&* *cap.* 14. And generally all our Proteſtant Divines againſt the Papiſts, alledging the Texts above-mentioned and others, do prove abundantly, that in the ſenſe declared, the Pope is to be ſubject to a general Council, wherein alſo ſundry Papiſts do concurr with them. And queſtionleſs, if in the time of *Auguſtine* (who was no contemner of Synods & Councils) any in this ſenſe had declared, that they would not have ſubmitted their apprehenſions to their judgment, hee would have cried out againſt them as well as againſt the Donatiſts, *O impudentem vocem!* And we hope, when you have weighed the matter better, you will not in this ſenſe ſee any reaſon to refuſe to ſubmit either your ſenſe and apprehenſions of our Paper, or what you may publiſh as your own private Judgments in other matters about Religion, to the Judgment of a general Council, ſuppoſing it might be had.

Wee have now done with your Preface, and come to the matter it ſelf, wherein you profeſſe,

(1.) *To joyn with us in a deep ſenſe of the ſeveral groſſe ſins and errors of the times, deſiring earneſtly to mourn firſt for your own ſins, next for the ſins of others, &c.* And here wee do heartily pray, that neither wee nor you may any of us condemn our ſelves, either by profeſſing our ſorrow, for what ſins we may practiſe, or by refuſing to help forward the good that we profeſſe to allow of, but may teſtifie the truth of our ſorrow for our own and other mens ſins, by ſuitable endeavors to reform what is amiſſe in our ſelves, and helping forward every one in his place the reformation of others.

(2.) In the next place, you ſay, *You are alſo ſenſible with us, that there are ſundry perſons groſly ignorant in the main points of Chriſtian Religion.* And if ſo, wee hope you will acknowledg, that where, after the injoying of plenty of Preaching and the publick Catechizing, that hath been uſed for many years together, (and much more where there hath been leſſe of this means) many continue groſly ignorant in the main points of Religion, it is at leaſt not to be condemned in ſuch Miniſters, as ſhall be willing to take the pains by private Catechizing to inſtruct ſuch perſons: This courſe being to the Miniſters a matter of pains

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onely ; and that hereupon, where the publick Catechizing attains not its desired end, the private may be good and usefull, that so poor souls perish not for lack of knowledg.

(3.) Lastly *You hope, That wee with you are sensible and grieved, though*, you say, *wee do not mention them, for the grosse errors in judgment and damnable Doctrine of many, who have rent themselves into as many several Heresies, as they have into Sects and Schisms.*

You may perceive by the title of our Paper, that it was a representation of our apprehensions to the Provincial Assembly, in the Case to us propounded by the said Provincial, and what that was, wee shall particularly declare anon, (although by what wee say had been complained of, and represented unto us, it might be gathered) and therefore wee were chiefly to apply our selves to that, which was therein our main work and businesse. That the grosse and damnable errors, that the loosnesse of these times have brought forth, are to be bewailed (if it were possible) with tears of blood, is most freely to be confessed. And whether wee lay them not to heart in some poor measure, God the searcher of all hearts hee knows ; as what complaints have been made of these by the members of this Classis, both in their prayers and preaching, men can witnesse ; and likewise what testimonies have been given to the truth of Jesus Christ, and against the errors of the times, subscribed with their hands and published to the world, though therein but concurring with the rest of their Reverend Brethren in this Province, in the Province of *London*, and other Counties of the Land, posterity may reade, when wee are in our graves. But as to the most of the Congregations belonging to this Classis, the great businesse to be looked after was the use of our best indeavors, for the informing of the ignorant, and the reforming of the scandalous, the numbers of these being great, and of those that are so grosly erroneous as to maintain damnable doctrines, and whereof you professe your selves to be so sensible, very inconsiderable, in comparison of the former : and in sundry of our Congregations, if not in most, (blessed be God for it) not any at all, that wee know of. And therefore there was not that reason to make any such expresse mention of these as of the former,

former, although in our Paper wee were not herein neither altogether ſilent, as will after appear.

Having profeſſed your agreement with us thus farr, yo go on to declare your ſelves, *That, touching the way of informing the ignorant, and reforming the wicked and erroneous, you ſhall not much diſſent.* And

(1.) You ſay, *For the Information and inſtruction of the ignorant by way of Catechizing before they be admitted to the Sacrament, the courſe by us publiſhed* (*provided*, you ſay, *it be in publick*) *little differeth from the Order preſcribed by the Church of* England *and other Reformed Churches abroad, before any be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.*

That all Children and others, (ſo many as it is fit to inſtruct after that manner) be publickly catechized, is that, which we heartily wiſh had been & were more generally practiſed in our own Church at home, as it is practiſed by the Reformed Churches abroad. And certainly, had the publick catechizing of Children and others been more generally and conſtantly practiſed, there had not been that cauſe to complain of the groſſe ignorance of ſundry perſons of ripe years, and ſome of them governours of Families, as now there is. Wee do alſo underſtand you by what you do here expreſſe, that you judg it not meet, that the groſly ignorant ſhould be admitted to the Lords Supper, in that you ſeem to approve of the practice of the Reformed Churches abroad, (as of our own at home) in taking courſe to inform the ignorant, before they admit them to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; And therefore wee ſee not how you can in reaſon deny, but there ought to be an examination and trial of all perſons, before they be admitted to the Lords Supper, that ſo the groſly ignorant may not be admitted, as they might be, if all promiſcuouſly were admitted without any trial at all.

But whereas, in this conceſſion about catechizing, you have a *Proviſo*, that it be in publick, wee do not ſee, why you ſhould ſo limit it, if it be confeſſed, that it is neceſſary, that the ignorant ſhould be informed, and that catechizing is an uſefull means to attain that end. You know how it would daſh ſundry knowing perſons to be catechized publickly in the Congregation.

But as for those that are conscious to themselves, that they are very ignorant, if these should be called forth to publique Catechizing, it were more likely to drive them from the publique Assembly, and so from the use of all means for their information, then be availeable to this end. As touching what was propounded by us in our paper, as the way for their information (though it was not intended for any such a purpose as to exclude publique Catechizing) it was done in way of condescension to the weakest, and to shew our willingness to apply our selves to any course, so we might be instrumentall to bring poor dark and blinde Souls to the knowledge of Christ, and which in our Judgement is more likely to be attained in many, as the ease stands with them, in a more private way of Catechizing in any of the wayes propounded by us, then if we should Catechize all the severall Families publiquely before the whole congregation.

(2) Touching those *that erre so grossely, whether in Doctrinals or points of discipline, thereby rending from a true constituted Church*, you say, *we speak nothing, either of their sin or punishment, yet you hope, we with you do hold, that the Churches lawfull Pastors have the power of the keyes committed to them, to excommunicate such offenders.*

We have given you the reason already, why we made not such express mention of these offenders, as of the former, although (as you will hereafter perceive) we are not wholly silent touching either the sin or punishment of these. Onely at present, because you profess to allow of that previous course of admonition prescribed by Christ, in reference to the scandalous *Mat.* 18. before they be excommunicated, but here say nothing of any such course to be taken with the heretically or schismatically; (though we hope also of you, that you disallow it not) we shall briefly declare, what course is to be held by the rules of the Presbyterian Government, before the sentence of excommunication pass against these offenders, and whereof our paper was not silent. This Government, however it gives no toleration to *any such errours, as subvert the faith; or any other errours, which overthrow the power of godliness; if the party, who holds them, spreads them, seeking to*

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draw others after him, or to any ſuch practiſes, as in their own nature manifeſtly ſubvert that order, Unity and Peace, which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed in his Church. Theſe being offences cenſured by this Government, (and of which further afterward,) yet this Government preſcribes the exerciſe of patience and long ſuffering (even toward thoſe that do groſſely erre in Doctrine as well as toward thoſe that are ſcandalous in life) in the uſe of all means for the convincing them of their errours; by reaſoning with them out of the Scriptures: as we ſee was practiſed in the Synod, that was held at *Jeruſalem*; and as we ſee the Fathers of the *Nicene* Councel, did not diſdain to reaſon and diſpute with *Arrius* (though he denyed the Deity of Chriſt) before they condemned him: And as alſo other Fathers did with other Hereticks in the Synods, although oftentimes in vain. That ſo none might have any juſt cauſe to complain, that they were condemned, before they were fully heard. And as touching ſuch as run into ſuch practices, as in their own nature tend manifeſtly to the ſubverting of that order and unity which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed in the Church, it labours with theſe alſo in the uſe of all gentle means to reclaim them, and bring them back again to the Church they have rent themſelves from, before it proceed to cenſure. As it doth alſo put a difference between the ſeducers, and ring-leaders of a Sect, and thoſe that are miſled. Having reſpect not only to the nature of the offence, but alſo to the quality of the offender; and exerciſeth patience and forbearance towards all, ſo long as there is any hope of reducing them by milde correction: Being ever more deſireous to heal, then cut off any member. And thus having declared our ſelves in this, we go on with you.

(3) For you ſay; *For ſuch as are ſcandalous and wicked in their lives, admonition private and publique is to be obſerved, according to Chriſts rule* Mat. 18. *But if they ſtill continue, and will not reform, the Churches lawfull Paſtors have power to excommunicate ſuch.*

In this you fully come up to what we hold, as to the means, that is to be uſed for the reformation of theſe, and we are glad there is an agreement in judgement betwixt you and us thus far. Neither can we ſee how, upon this conceſſion, you can in reaſon

ſon finde fault with our proceedings, if there ſhould be occaſion for our cenſuring any ſuch perſons, as for their notorious offences and their obſtinacy therein, might juſtly merit the higheſt cenſure.

For however, perhaps you may ſay, you ſtumble chiefely at this, that our ruling Elders (that in your judgement may be but meer Lay-men) do joyn in the Government with us; yet we ſee not how this can be any juſt ground of ſcruple to any of you, who (if we miſtake not) were all of you ſatisfied in your conſciences touching the lawfulneſs of the late Government of Epiſcopacy, as it was then exerciſed, at leaſt as to ſubmiſſion to it; and wherein High-Commiſſioners, Chancelors and Commiſſaries (that were as much Lay-men then, as ruling Elders can be in your judgement now) had ſo great a ſhare, as to ſuſpend Miniſters from the exerciſe of their Miniſtry, upon ſuch complaints as, according to the orders, that were appointed in thoſe dayes, they might take cognizance of, and ſo far, as to decree the ſentence of excommunication againſt them and others, as there was occaſion for it.

But here we muſt yet further profeſs, we do not know, whom you mean by lawfull Paſtors, to whom you here grant the
Dr Hammond. power of excommunication. Some we know, there are, that would make the Dioceſan Biſhops the onely Paſtors of the Church, and that other Miniſters do but officiate by deputation from them and under them. We hope you are not of the minde of theſe. For then, as the diſſent in judgement betwixt you and us would be far greater, then as yet we apprehend it is; ſo hence it will follow, that, till Prelacy ſhould be reſtored, there muſt not (if you would provide for the ſafety of the perſons and eſtates of them that ſhould mannage the Government) be the diſpencing of any Church cenſures at all. For you may eaſily know, that not only by Acts and Ordinances of Parliament before made for the aboliſhing of Archbiſhops and Biſhops, &c. (and which are confirmed by the late humble Advice aſſented unto by his Highneſs *ſect.* 12.) the office and juriſdiction of Dioceſan Biſhops is taken away. But there is yet a further Barre put in againſt Prelacy in the 11. *ſect.* of the aforeſaid humble Advice; where it is expreſly cautioned, (and

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we judge it was out of a conſcientious mindfulneſs of what had been in thoſe very termes covenanted againſt) that the liberty, that is granted to ſome, be not extended to Popery and Prelacy. And therefore if any Dioceſan Biſhop ſhould exerciſe his jurisdiction, and excommunicate any perſon within this Land, wherein by Authority (as you may ſee afterward) there is alſo an appointment of another Government, we leave it to thoſe, that are learned in the Law to determine, whether ſuch Dioceſan Biſhops would not run themſelves into a *præmunire*.

But if you do not reſtrain lawfull Paſtors to theſe onely, our doubt yet is, Whether you mean not onely ſuch Miniſters, as were ordained by Dioceſan Biſhops, excluding thoſe out of the number, that, ſince their being taken away, have been ordained by Presbyters onely?

If this be your ſenſe, we ſhall onely at preſent minde you, of what is publiſhed, to be the Judgement of Dr *Uſher* late Primate of *Ireland*, in a Book lately put forth by Dr *Bernard*, Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Grayes-Inne*; and whom, though a ſtranger to us, and one of a different judgement from us in the point of Epiſcopacy, yet we reverence for his moderation and profeſſion of his deſires for peace, *wiſhing that ſuch, as do conſent in ſubſtantials for matter of Doctrine, would conſider of ſome conjunction in point of Diſcipline. That private intereſts and circumſtantials might not keep them thus far aſunder.* In which wiſh as we do cordially joyn our ſelves, ſo we heartily deſire, that all godly and moderate ſpirited men throughout the Land would alſo cloſe. But the book, which the ſaid Doctor hath lately publiſhed, is intituled. *The Judgement of the late Archbiſhop of* Armagh *and Primate of* Ireland, *&c.* In this Book this Doctor tells us, that the late Primate in Anſwer to a letter of his (ſent to him as it ſhould ſeem for that purpoſe) declares his Judgement touching the ordination of the Miniſtry in the Reformed Churches in *France* and *Holland*. There he ſaith, that *Epiſcopus & Presbyter gradu tantùm differunt, non ordine.* And conſequently, that in places, where Biſhops cannot be had, the ordination by Presbyters ſtandeth valid. And in the cloſe of his Anſwer about this point he ſaith; *That for the teſtifying*

* See pag. 1 of his laſt Book.

teſtifying of his Communion with the Churches (of the *Low-Countryes*) of whom he had ſpoken immediately before: and which he there profeſſeth, *He doth love and honour as true members of the Univerſall Church:* (notwithſtanding the difference, that was betwixt him and them about the point of Epiſcopacy) he doth profeſs, *That with like affection he ſhould receive the bleſſed* Sacrament *at the hands of the Dutch Miniſters, if he were in* Holland, *as he ſhould do at the hands of the French Miniſters if, he were in* Charenton. See *pag.* 125. and 126. Hence you may perceive, that the Judgement of D^r *Uſher* was; That the Ordination of Presbyters, where Biſhops cannot be had, ſtandeth valid. And conſequently, if you be of his opinion, (and you muſt have ſtronger reaſons, then ever yet we have ſeen, to bear you out therein if you judge otherwiſe) they ought to be eſteemed lawfull Paſtors, to whom you grant the power of Excommunication, Biſhops being now taken away, and may not therefore ordain according to the preſent Laws of the Land. The ſaid Dr *Bernard* hath ſome animadvertiſements upon that Letter (in which D^r *Uſher* doth deliver his judgement, as above ſaid) and there ſhews, that he was not in this Judgement of his ſingular. He alledgeth Dr *Davenant*, that pious and learned Biſhop of *Sarisbury*, as conſenting with him in it (in his determinations *quæſt.* 42.) and produceth the principall of the Schooleman, *Gulielmus Pariſienſis*, *Gerſon*, *Durand*, &c. and declares it to be the Generall opinion of the Schoolemen; *Epiſcopatum ut diſtinguitur à ſimplici ſacerdotio non eſſe alium ordinem*, &c. ſee *pag.* 130. of the aforenamed Book, as alſo *pag.* 131. 132. Where the concurrence of Dr *Davenant* with D^r *Uſher* in his judgement about this matter is declared more fully. He addes alſo others, as in ſpeciall, Dr *Richard Field* in his learned Book of the Church *lib.* 3. *cap.* 39. and *lib.* 5. *cap.* 27. And alſo that Book intituled *A defence of the Ordination of the Miniſters of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, maintained by Archdeacon* Maſon *againſt the Romaniſts.* And further he ſaith; *He hath been aſſured, it was not onely the Judgement of Biſhop* Overall, *but that he had a principall hand in it.* He tell us, *that the fore-mentioned Author produceth many teſtimonies; The M^r of the Sentences, and moſt of the Schoolemen,* Bona-

Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Durand, Dominicus Soto, Richardus Armachanus, Toſtatus, Alphonſus a Caſtro, Gerſon, Petrus Caniſius, *to have affirmed the ſame; and at laſt quoteth* Medina *a principall Biſhop of the Councill of* Trent, *who affirmed, That* Jerome, Ambroſe, Auguſtine, Sedulius, Primaſius, Chryſoſtome, Theodoret, Theophylact *were of the ſame judgment alſo.* But you may ſee theſe things your ſelves in Dr *Bernard, pag.* 132, 133, 134. Wee have been onely at the pains to tranſcribe them.

Wee could alledg many more Teſtimonies to prove this: But wee count theſe ſufficient; and do alledg theſe the rather, becauſe brought by one that is of the ſame Judgment with you, as wee ſuppoſe.

But having declared how farr you accord with us in Judgment, touching the way of informing the ignorant, and reforming the wicked perſons, and ſchiſmatical, *&c.* you tell us; *That you are not therein ſo wavering and unſettled in your apprehenſions of the Caſe, as to ſubmit either it or them, either wholly or in part, to the contrary Judgment and determination of a general Councill of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches, much leſſe to a new termed Provincial Aſſembly at* Preſton; *wherein you profeſſe no little to differ from us.*

That, which wee ſubmitted wholly to the Judgment of the Provincial Aſſembly, was not, whether Catechizing was a way appointed by God in his Word, for the information of the ignorant; but in what way of Catechizing (as is expreſſed in our Paper) the ignorant in our Congregations, who never offered themſelves unto the Sacrament, were moſt like to be brought to ſome meaſure of knowledg; and which is not a matter of Doctrine but of Order onely. Neither was it by us ſubmitted to that Aſſembly; whether the cenſures of the Church were the means appointed by Chriſt for the reforming of the ſcandalous? But whether it might not be meet *pro hic & nunc*, and as the preſent caſe ſtood, to apply the Cenſures? (and ſo put in practice at this time that, which in the General wee were ſufficiently aſſured from the word of Truth, was the way for their reformation) and with which wee were both by God and Man intruſted to diſpenſe unto thoſe that were openly ſcandalous in

our Congregations; However they contented themselves to live in the want of the Lords Supper, nor ever presented themselves to the Eldership to be admitted to it. And this (because meerely circumstantiall, as to the dispencing of the Censures at this time and to such Persons) we think herein we owed the Provinciall Assembly (unto whose Authority we profess our selves to be subject) so much respect and duty, as to submit our apprehensions in a Case of this nature (which they had propounded unto us to be seriously weighed, as they had done to the rest of the Classes within this Province) unto their Judgement, and to take their concurrent approvall along with us, before we proceeded to practise in a matter of this weight. And yet we have declared before, That however we are not so wavering and unsettled in matters of faith, as to resolve our belief into the determination of *Synods* or Councils, believing no more, nor no otherwise, then as they determine: Yet that it is not out of the compass of the authority of a *Synod* to examine, try and authoritatively to censure Doctrines as well as matters of Discipline. And we think (how confident soever you may be of the soundness and orthodoxness of what in your Paper you propound in way of exception against any thing in ours) you have not such clear and inquestionable grounds from Scripture for the same, that you were to be accused of wavering or unsettledness, if you had submitted the same to have been examined and tried by a Provincial Assembly: and much less, if you could have had the opportunity of submitting it to the Censure of a General Council.

But whereas mentioning our Provincial Assembly at *Preston*, you call it a new termed *Provincial Assembly*. If your meaning be, that the terming it a Provincial Assembly in stead of a Provincial *Synod* is a new term, then this is but onely a *Logomachia*, and not much to be insisted on. Although we frequently call it a Provincial *Synod* as well as a Provincial Assembly. But if your meaning be; *That it is a new termed Provincial Assembly at* Preston. Because Provinciall *Synods* or Assemblies have been held but lately at *Preston*, we see not (if Provinciall Assemblies be warrantable, and have been of ancient use in the Church; that having been long in dis-use, they begin of late

late to be held at *Preſton*, that can juſtly incurre your cenſure. But if the Antiquity of ſuch Aſſemblies be that you queſtion: Then we referre you to what Dr *Bernard* in the Book of his above quoted, ſhews was the Judgement of Dr *Uſher* (who is acknowledged by all that knew him, or are acquainted with his works, to have been a great Antiquary; however we alleadge him not, that you ſhould build your faith upon his Teſtimony) and which we think may be ſufficient to vindicate Provincial Aſſemblies in your thoughts from all ſuſpition of novelty. In that Book you have in the cloſe of it propoſals touching the Reduction of Epiſcopacy unto the form of *Synodical* Government received in the ancient Church. And it thus begins. *By the Order of the Church of* England, *all Presbyters are charged to adminiſter the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Diſcipline of Chriſt, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Realm hath received. And that they might the better underſtand, what the Lord hath commanded herein, The exhortation of* Paul *to the Elders of* Epheſus Acts 20. 28. *is appointed to be read unto them at the time of their Ordination.* A little after it is acknowledged, *That* Ignatius *by Presbytery mentioned by* Paul 1 Tim. 4. 14. *did underſtand the Community of the reſt of the Presbyters or Elders, who then had a hand, not onely in the delivery of the Doctrine and Sacraments, but alſo in the adminiſtration of the Diſcipline of Chriſt.* And for further proof. Tertullian *is alleadged in his Generall Apologie for Chriſtians. Where he ſaith, that in the Church are uſed exhortations, chaſtiſements and divine cenſure; For Judgement is given with great advice, as among thoſe, who are certain, they are in the ſight of God. And it is the chiefeſt foreſhewing of the Judgement to come, if any man have ſo offended, that he be baniſhed from the Communion of Prayer, and of the Aſſembly, and of all holy Fellowſhip. The Preſidents, that bear rule therein, are certain approved Elders, who have obtained this honour, not by reward, but by good report. There alſo is further ſhewed, That in matters of Eccleſiaſtical judicature,* Cornelius *Biſhop of* Rome *uſed the received form of gathering together the Presbytery. And that* Cyprian *ſufficiently declares of what Perſons that conſiſted; When he wiſheth him to read his Letter to the flouriſhing Clergy, which there did preſide*

or rule with him. And further, That in the 4th Council of Carthage *it was concluded. That the Biſhop might hear no mans cauſe without the preſence of the Clergy. And that otherwiſe the Biſhops ſentence ſtould be void, unleſs it were confirmed by the Clergy. And yet further. That this is found inſerted into the Canons of* Egbert (*who was Archbiſhop of* York *in the* Saxon *times*) *and afterwards into the body of the Canon law it ſelf. It is here alſo acknowledged, That in our Church, this kind of Presbyterian Government hath been much diſuſed. Yet that it did profeſs, that every Paſtor hath a right to rule the Church (from whence alſo the name of Rector was at firſt given unto him) and adminiſter the Diſcipline of Chriſt, as well as to diſpence the Doctrine and Sacraments*, &c. By all which it is acknowledged, and alſo proved; That the form of Government by the united ſuffrages of the Clergy, is ancient: and which is there in expreſs termes aſſerted; as it might be demonſtrated by many more Teſtimonies, but that we conceive theſe already mentioned are ſufficient, and being alleadged by the aforementioned Author, As alſo evidencing what his own Judgement was in this point, may be more likely to ſway with you (if in that there ſhould be a diſſent betwixt you and us) then any thing, that we could our ſelves produce. But in this reduction of Epiſcopacy to the form of *Synodical* Government received in the ancient Church, there are propoſals of Aſſemblies of Paſtors within certain limited bounds. Which (ſaving that they are ſome of them ſomewhat larger then ours, which is but a circumſtantial difference) do hold proportion with the Claſſical, Provincial, and National Aſſemblies, mentioned in the form of our Church Government. As alſo the times propounded there for their meeting, the power of theſe Aſſemblies, and what they were to have Cognizance of, and the ſubordination of the leſſer to the greater, with liberty of Appeal, if need ſhould require, and are the ſame in ſubſtance as with us. And all theſe were propounded, as the way of Government in the ancient Church, and in the year 1641: (after the troubles, that had riſen in *Scotland* about Epiſcopacy and the Ceremonies, and before the ſetting up of the Presbyterian Government in this Land, had ſo much as fallen under debate in the Parliament,

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ſo far as ever we heard of) as an expedient to prevent the troubles, that did after ariſe in this Land about the matter of Church Government, being for the moderating of Epiſcopacy; That at that time was grown to that height, that it had quite taken away from the Paſtors that rule, that of right did belong unto them; And for the Reduction of it to the ancient form of *Synodicall* Government. And therefore in the Judgement of this learned and reverend Antiquary, our Provincial Aſſembly at *Preſton* (where the Paſtors of the Churches are members, as he acknowledgeth of right they ought to be in ſuch Aſſemblies) would not have been accounted a new termed Provincial Aſſembly.

But you go on and tell us. *That other parts of our Paper are full of darkneſs, to which you ſay, you cannot ſo fully aſſent, till further explicated and unfolded by us.*

We cannot apprehend any ſuch darkneſs in our Paper, as you ſpeak of. But yet becauſe in yours, you queſtion what authority we have from the civil Magiſtrate, for what we do, and likewiſe the extent of it: and your miſtakes of our meaning may perhaps ſome of them ariſe from your unacquaintedneſs with the rule we walk by. Although we were not to be blamed for any miſtakes, that might ariſe *ab ignorantia juris* (whether ſimple or affected, that we determine not, but leave you to examine;) Before we come to make Anſwer more particularly to what follows, we are willing to be at ſome paines to give you ſome further account of the power we are awarranted by the civil Authority, for to exerciſe. To what perſons within our bounds it extends it ſelf: and what ſome of thoſe rules are, that are preſcribed unto us by civil Authority, to walk by in the exerciſe of that power we are betruſted with.

It is a general and common miſtake amongſt many, that the Presbyterian Government was eſtabliſhed by the Parliament but for three yeers, and that therefore it is now expired and out of date. But if you peruſe all that paſſed in Parliament touching it, no ſuch matter will appear. *The directions of the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament, after advice had with the Aſſembly of Divines, for the Electing and chuſing Ruling Elders in all the Congregations, and in the Claſſical Aſſemblies,*

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for the Cities of London *and* Westminster, *and the severall* Counties *of the* Kingdom, *For the speedy setling of the Presbyterian Government, bearing date* August. 19. 1645. *Their Ordinance together with Rules and Directions, concerning suspension from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, in cases of Ignorance and scandall, dated* Octob. 20. 1645. *The Votes also of the said Houses for the Choise of Elders throughout the* Kingdom *of* England *and Dominion of* Wales *in the respective Parish Churches and Chappels, according to the directions before mentioned. And touching the power granted to the Tryers of Elections of Elders, Of the date of* Feb. 20. 1645. *and* Feb. 26. 1645. *Their Ordinance for keeping scandalous Persons from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; the inabling of Congregations for the choice of Elders, and supplying of defects in former Ordinances and Directions of Parliament concerning Church Government, bearing date* March 14. 1645. *The Remedies prescribed by them for removing some obstructions in Church Government, dated* Aprill. 22. 1647. *And their Ordinance for the speedy dividing and setling the severall* Counties *of this* Kingdom *into distinct Classicall Presbyteries and Congregationall Elderships, dated* Jan. 29. 1647. We say, all these were passed absolutely without any proviso's at all, limiting the time of their continuance, that is expressed in any of them. Indeed in the Ordinance of Parliament giving power to all the Classical Presbyteries within their respective bounds, to examine, approve and ordain Ministers for severall Congregations, dated *Nov.* 10. 1645. It is provided in the Close of it, *That it shall stand in force for twelve moneths, and no longer.* As it is provided in another Ordinance for the Ordination of Ministers by the Classicall Presbyters within their respective bounds for the severall Congregations in the *Kingdom* of, *England* bearing date *August.* 28. 1646. *That it shall stand in force for three years and no longer.* Which latter might give to some (that took but the matter upon report) an occasion to conceive, that the Presbyterian Government was setled but for three years. Although that was but ill applied to all the severall Ordinances that had passed before, which belonged onely to one. But the Ordinance especially, from which meerely (as we conceive) the mistake arose about

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ſettling the Presbyterian Government for three years onely, was the Ordinance that paſſed *June* 5. 1646. The title whereof is, *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament, for the preſent ſettling (without further delay) of the Presbyteriall Government in the Church of* England. In the Cloſe whereof it is ordained. *That this Ordinance ſhall continue for the ſpace of three years, and no longer, unleſs both Houſes think fit to continue it. But if the matter of this Ordinance be conſulted, it is manifeſt it was but touching a Committee of Lords and Commons to adjudge and determine ſcandalous offences not formerly enumerated, appointed by the Ordinance in ſtead and place of Commiſſioners mentioned in the Ordinance of* March 14. 1645. *And alſo ſhewing how the Elderſhips were to proceed in the examination of ſuch ſcandalous offences. And touching what power was granted to the ſaid Committee, and in what ſort they were to proceed, as is clear to any, that ſhall but take the paines to peruſe that Ordinance.* The ground whereof in the preface to it, is made to be this. *The Lords and Commons in Parliament holding their former reſolution, that all notorious and ſcandalous offenders ſhall be kept from the Sacrament, have thought fit to make a further addition to the ſcandalous offences formerly enumerated, for which men ſhall be kept back from the Sacrament. And leaſt the ſtay of the enumeration, and the not naming of Commiſſioners to judge of Caſes not enumerated, ſhould hinder the putting in execution the Presbyterian Government already eſtabliſhed, They have thought fit, &c. And do therefore ordain a Committee (therein particularly nominated) in ſtead and place of Commiſſioners.*

The groundleſneſs of the miſtake about ſettling the Presbyterial Government for three years onely, that might ariſe from the proviſo in this Ordinance, is ſo clear to any common underſtanding, that the bare recitall of the ſum of the matter of this Ordinance, and the ground of making it, doth make it to fully to appear, that it were but loſt labour to uſe any more words about it. But we have particularly mentioned all that ever paſſed the Parliament (ſo far as we have either ſeen or heard of) that hath reſpected Church Government, until the year 1648. *When the form of Church Government to*

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be used in the Church of England *and* Ireland *was agreed upon by the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament, after Advice had with the Assembly of Divines, and was ordered by them to be printed* August. 19. *of the said* year 1648. And this Ordinance (wherein all that had passed the Parliament before in parts, and at severall times, and what ever was but temporary, by vertue of other Ordinances (so far as was intended for continuance) are moulded up into a complete body, with a supply of sundry things that had been never mentioned nor published before in other Ordinances) is without any limitation of time for its continuance, and remains unrepealed to this day, for any thing we have seen or heard to the contrary. Nay we think (as we shall touch upon anon) That by the humble Advice, assented to by his Highness, this Ordinance (as well as others) receives strength.

But by this full account given, we think we have made it sufficiently to appear, that we have had the Authority of the civill Magistrate to bear us out, in what we have acted since the first setting up of the Presbyterian Government untill this present. Except there be any, that can come forth, and charge us to have transgressed the rules appointed by the Parliament for us to observe in our actings, against which our own innocency only shall be our defence.

It now remaines for your further satisfaction and our own vindication, that we recite some things particularly out of the form of Church Government, which we conceive are thereunto subservient.

In the very first Words of the Ordinance (according to what we have before recited in the directions for the electing and chooſing of ruling Elders, and is there also to be found) you may find it thus. *Be it ordered and ordained by the Lords and Commons in Parliament Assembled and by Authority of the same, That all Parishes and Places whatsoever within the* Kingdom *of* England *and Dominion of* Wales, (*as well Priviledged Places and exempted jurisdictions, as others*) *be brought under the Government of Congregationall, Classicall, Provinciall and Nationall Assemblies*, &c. Where it is to us unquestionable, That by vertue of this appointment, such as live within the bounds

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of our ſeverall congregations and Pariſhes are under the power of ſome one or other of the Congregational Elderſhips, conſtituted by Authority of Parliament within our ſeverall Pariſhes; And that all thoſe, that live within the bounds of our Claſſis (mentioned before) are under the power of our Claſſicall Aſſembly, conſtituted in like manner by the ſaid Authority.

What power is given particularly to the congregationall Elderſhips, you may finde in the aforeſaid form of Church Government, and unto which we refer you; onely we ſhall minde you, *That by vertue thereof, they have power, as they ſhall ſee juſt occaſion, to enquire into the knowledge and ſpirituall eſtate of any member of the Congregation to admoniſh, and rebuke, to ſuſpend from the Lords Table, thoſe who are found by them, to be ignorant and ſcandalous, and to excommunicate according to the rules and directions after following.* And it is thereby ordained, *That the Examination and Judgement of ſuch Perſons, as ſhall for their ignorance in the points of Religion, mentioned in that Ordinance, not be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is to be in the power of the Elderſhip of every Congregation.* All which will appear by the expreſs Letter of the ſaid Ordinance, to any, that will conſult it, and which not only juſtifies all that is practiſed in that caſe by the ſeverall Elderſhips, but alſo ſhews what grounds this Claſſis had for that which was mentioned in our Paper, touching both what is therein appointed to the Miniſter about Catechizing Families, and alſo concerning the Miniſters exhorting ſuch, as in the ſeverall Families he ſhould finde to be of competent knowledge, and know to be of blameleſs life, That they ſhould preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip; The Triall and Judgement in this caſe not belonging to any one Miniſter alone, but to the Elderſhip.

There are alſo rules and directions given in this Ordinance to be obſerved by the ſeverall Elderſhips, concerning ſuſpenſion from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in caſes of ſcandall, which may be ſeen there particularly. But there is no rule given, that will allow either the Elderſhip or Claſſis, according to the ſeveral powers to them therein granted, either to warn before all, or to excommunicate knowing and blameleſs men

for their meer not preſenting themſelves before the Elderſhip.

The rules of this Government preſcribe otherwiſe; as we our ſelves muſt alſo needs profeſs, that we are not conſcious to our ſelves, that we have given any juſt occaſion by our management thereof, That contrary to the expreſs rules appointed therein to be obſerved by us, and to the plain ſenſe of our expreſſions uſed in our Paper (of which afterward,) any ſuch a thing ſhould have been ſo much as ſuppoſed to have been intended from any thing there expreſſed.

Give us leave to proceed a little further, to lay open the order that is preſcribed in the above mentioned form of Church Government, touching the order of proceeding to excommunication; which as it will awarrant the publiſhing of mens names openly in the Congregation, and warning them before all to reform, being ſuch as are juſtly cenſurable by the rules thereof, and particularly where it preſcribes, *that ſeveral publique admonitions ſhall be given to the offenders*, &c. So it will awarrant us in any thing, that is made cenſurable by that Paper of ours, that was publiſhed.

To make this to appear, as alſo to ſhew what reaſon, we had to make known to the ſeveral congregations within our bounds, what our Paper held forth. We ſhall here declare, what offences are cenſurable with this greateſt and laſt cenſure of Excommunication, according to the order, that is there preſcribed, and which, as it requires, *that it be inflicted with great and mature deliberation, and after all other good means have been eſſayed*; ſo it appoints in theſe expreſs Words.

That ſuch Errours in practice as ſubvert the Faith, or any other Errours, which overthrow the power of Godlineſs; if the party who holds them, ſpread them, ſeeking to draw others after him; and ſuch ſins in practice, as cauſe the Name and Truth of God to be blaſphemed, cannot ſtand with the power of godlineſs; and ſuch practiſes, as in their own nature manifeſtly ſubvert that order, unity and Peace, which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed in his Church; and particularly all thoſe ſcandalous ſins, for which any Perſon is to be ſuſpended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, obſtinately perſiſted in; theſe being publiquely known, to the juſt ſcandall

dall of the Church; The ſentence of Excommunication may and ought to proceed, according to the directions after following.

But the Perſons, that hold other Errours in Judgement, about which learned and Godly men poſſibly may and do differ, and which ſubvert not the faith, nor are deſtructive to godlineſs, or that be guilty of ſuch ſins of infirmities, as are commonly found in the Children of God: or being otherwiſe ſound in the faith, and holy in life (and ſo not falling under cenſure by the former rules) endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of Peace; and do yet out of conſcience, not come up to the obſervation of all thoſe rules, which are or ſhall be eſtabliſhed by Authority, for regulating the outward worſhip of God, and Government of his Church. The ſentence of excommunication for theſe cauſes ſhall not be denounced againſt them.

Theſe things this Claſſis taking into Conſideration, together with the power they were betruſted with by God and Man, for the diſpencing the cenſures of the Church, in the caſes cenſurable by the rules here laid down and elſewhere, in the form of Church Government: And there having been in the Provinciall Aſſembly ſeverall debates touching ſuch Perſons as in the ſeveral Congregations were ignorant and ſcandalous, who offered not themſelves to the Sacrament, nor to the Elderſhip in order to their admiſſion to it: and they commending it to the ſeveral Claſſical Presbyteries to be conſidered of, whether ſome further courſe was not to be held, for the information of the one, and the reformation of the other, then yet had been taken, notwithſtanding their neglect; and what they judged fitteſt to be done for the attaining thoſe ends; and to repreſent their thoughts therein to the next Aſſembly. This Claſſis upon the whole concluded to repreſent their apprehenſions in the Caſe, as is expreſſed in the Paper that was publiſhed, which was approved of before by the Provincial Aſſembly, and which they judge is ſufficiently awarranted, in regard of any thing therein contained, by the rules expreſſed in the above mentioned form of Church Government.

We having thus far ſhewed what we have been, and are awarranted to practice by the ſeveral Ordinances above mentioned, we ſhall now proceed further to declare. That how-

ever we are no Lawyers, and therefore leave the determination of the Caſe to the learned in the Law to judge of, to whom it belongs: yet if it may be lawfull for us to judge of a matter of this nature from the principles of reaſon; It ſeems to us, that the above mentioned Ordinances about Church Government, as well as other Ordinances of Parliament, are confirmed in the humble Advice aſſented unto by his Highneſs in the 16. ſection thereof. Where we finde theſe Words. *And that nothing contained in this Petition and Advice, nor your Highneſs conſent thereunto, ſhall be conſtrued to extend to the repealing or making void of any Act or Ordinance, which is not contrary hereunto, or to the matters herein contained. But that the ſaid Acts and Ordinances, not contrary hereunto, ſhall continue and remain in force, in ſuch manner, as if this preſent Petition and Advice had not at all been had or made, or your Highneſs conſent thereunto given.* Whence we gather, that if in the ſeveral Ordinances for Church Government, there be nothing contrary to the humble Advice, or to the matters therein contained, they are not thereby (any more then any other Acts or Ordinances of Parliament) repealed, but left to remain in force. At leaſt, there ſeems to us to be a plain intimation, that they have a force in them, which is not by this humble Advice repealed and made void. For it doth not appear to us, That there is any thing in the Form of Church Government, or any other Ordinances of Parliament about that matter; that is contrary to the humble Advice or matters therein contained. And whereas in the 11th ſection there is mention made of ſome that differ in worſhip and diſcipline from the publique profeſſion of theſe Nations held forth, to whom ſome indulgence is granted; It ſeems to us, there is an acknowledgement and owning of what the late Parliament held forth, in regard of theſe the Directory for worſhip and form of Church Government, which they paſſed, as the publique profeſſion of theſe Nations in regard of worſhip and diſcipline. And in which apprehenſions we are the more confirmed, becauſe here in this ſection, mention is made of a confeſſion of faith to be agreed on by his Highneſs and the Parliament, there having nothing in that kind paſſed the late Parliament, that eſtabliſhed the Directory

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for worſhip and form of Church Government. However there had been a Confeſſion of faith drawn up by the late Aſſembly of Divines; Whence it ſeems to us clear, that they own the Directory for worſhip, and the form of Church Government, to be that which they hold forth, as the publique profeſſion of the Nation for worſhip and Government. To the ſame purpoſe we find in the Government of the Commonwealth of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, &c. As it was publiquely declared at *Weſtminſter Decemb.* 16. 1653. *pag.* 43. *Sect.* 37. *Where alſo they expreſs a worſhip and Diſcipline publiquely held forth, which muſt needs referre to the Directory and form of Church Government by us recited*; There being no other worſhip or diſcipline, that then had, or now hath, the civill Sanction, in this Nation.

We have been large, in what we have here repreſented in the generall, before we come to ſpeak more particularly to the reſt, that now follows in your Paper. But our pains being greater to make this full repreſentation unto you, then it will be for you to read it, we muſt intreat you to excuſe us, conſidering it tends as well to rectifie your miſtakes, as to vindicate our ſelves, being alſo deſirous not to be miſtaken any more, as alſo becauſe it layes a foundation for our briefer and more particular Anſwer unto what follows, and to which (theſe things being thus premiſed) we now come.

In the things, wherein you profeſs your ſelves to diſſent, till further explicated and unfolded by us.

(1) The firſt thing we meet with here is; That by the many Perſons of all ſorts, that are members of Congregations, and mentioned in our Paper, in your ſenſe thereof we ſeem to hint, that thereby we mean onely ſuch, *who have admitted themſelves members of ſome Congregation within our aſſociation, and yet live inordinately*, &c. *And that therefore you, who never were any members or aſſociates of ours, are not within the verge and compaſs of our Presbyterian diſcipline*, &c. Unto which we ſay; That we have conſtantly profeſſed againſt thoſe of the ſeparation. That the ſeveral Aſſemblies or Congregations within this Land, that make a profeſſion of the true Chriſtian and Apoſtolique Faith, are true Churches of Jeſus Chriſt.

Christ. That the several members of these Congregations are by their birth, members, as those that were born in the Jewish Church, are said to be, by the Apostle, Jews by nature: *Gal.* 2. That this their membership was sealed to them in their Baptism, that did solemnly admit them, as into the universal Church, so into the particular, wherein they were born. We have also constantly maintained against the afore mentioned Persons; That the Ministers of these Churches are true Ministers, notwithstanding that exception of theirs against them, that they were ordained by Bishops, who also themselves were true Ministers in our Judgement (though we cannot acknowledge, that by divine right they were superiour to their fellow brethren, either in regard of order or jurisdiction) And that therefore the Word and Sacraments (the most essential marks of a true visible Church, according to the professed Judgement of our Divines against the Papists on the one hand, and those of the separation on the other) dispensed by these Ministers, were, and are the true Ordinances of Jesus Christ. And that hereupon our work was not (when the Presbyterian Government was appointed) to constitute Churches, but to reform them onely. And that therefore none within our bounds, except they shall renounce Christianity and their Baptism, can be deemed by us to be without, in the Apostles sense; and so therefore not within the compass and verge of our Presbyterian Government. Neither is it their not associating with us in regard of Government, that doth exempt them from censure by it, if they should be such offenders, as by the rules thereof were justly censurable. It not being a matter arbitrary, for private Persons at their own will and pleasure to exempt themselves from under that Ecclesiastical Government, that is setled by Authority. And as you know it would not have been allowed of under the former Government.

(2) And therefore whether you, and all others within our bounds, be not comprehended within our Government, according to the rules laid down in the Ordinance of Parliament above mentioned, appointing the form of Church Government to be used in the Church of *England* and *Ireland*, and therein ordaining, as hath been recited before in the first page thereof,

and

and to which we refer you. (Eſpecially conſidering, that all within the bounds of our ſeveral Pariſhes (that are no other now them formerly) even Papiſts and Anabaptiſts and other Sectaries, were under the late Prelatical Government) we leave it to you to judge. Onely if ſo, we wiſh you to conſider, that then you are brought under the Government of Presbytery, not ſo much by us, as by the Parliament appointing this Government. And then we think you, who warn us not to contemn civil power, might well (out of reſpect to the Authority ordaining it, but eſpecially conſidering the word Presbytery is a known Scripture expreſſion 1 *Tim.* 4. and interpreted by ſundry of the Fathers, as we do, as hath been declared before) have uſed a more civil expreſſion, then to have called it a common fold, into which (it ſhould ſeem) your complaint is, that you ſhould be driven. Although Presbytery layes reſtraint on none, but ſuch as being ſcandalous in their lives, and ſo contemning the Laws of God, are therefore truely and indeed the lawleſs Perſons, that we ſpeak of. But whereas (as you ſuppoſe) *This is our chief deſign in this, as in other tranſactions of ours, to ſubject all to our Government.*

We do refer our ſelves to our courſe of life paſt, and hope it will witneſs with us, to all that will judge impartially, what our deſigns have been in our other tranſactions. And as touching our deſign in the Paper publiſhed, whether it hath been ought but the information of the ignorant, and reformation of the ſcandalous, to the Glory of God and their ſalvation, we leave it to be judged by thoſe, that will judge of mens intentions by what is expreſſed in their words and actions.

We know very well, we are charged by ſome, that we affect Dominion, to Lord it over the People, and to have all ſorts of Perſons, of what rank ſoever, to ſtoop to us. But we do openly profeſs, that the Government of the Church, that is committed unto men, is not Deſpotical, but Miniſterial. That it is no Dominion, but a Miniſtery onely. And that the Officers, that are intruſted with it, are themſelves to be ſubject, both in regard of their bodies and eſtates, to the Civil power: That by the Ordinance of God, they are appointed to

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be under, and that in their Government they have nothing to do with the bodies and eſtates of any Perſons, but with their Souls onely. Although here we deſire to enquire of you, whether, if you be indeed for the ſettling of any Government at all in the Church (as you profeſs to be) you do not think, that all ſhould be ſubject to it? We cannot judge you to be ſo irrational, as to be for a Government, and that yet ſubjection to it muſt be denyed. And if the late Government of the Prelacy was not blamed by you, becauſe it required ſubjection to it; we wiſh you to conſider, whether upon this account you have reaſon to cenſure us. But further, whereas you tell us; *That we garniſh our Government with the ſpecious title of Chriſts Government, Throne and Scepter.* We wiſh you to conſider, what in your Anſwer to an objection (that you frame out of our Paper) your ſelves do ſay. You there tell us. *You pray for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch Church Government, as is conſonant to the will of God, and univerſall practice of primitive Churches. That Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline may be exerciſed in the hands of them, to whom it was committed by Chriſt, and left by him to be tranſferred from hand to hand to the end of the World.* The expreſſions, you here uſe, are as high touching that Government you would have eſtabliſhed, as any have been, that ever we have uſed of ours. For your prayer is, *That Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline may be exerciſed in the hands of them, to whom it was committed by Chriſt, and left by him to be tranſferred from hand to hand to the end of the world.* The Government then, that you are for, muſt be with you, Chriſts Government Throne and Scepter. And why do you then condemn us, if we have uſed ſuch expreſſions concerning our Government, till you have convinced us, that it is not ſuch? When yet you take to your ſelves the Liberty to uſe the like language, concerning the Government you pray may be eſtabliſhed.

But whereas you ſay, Presbytery is the main thing driven at here, and that however ſhe comes uſhered in with Godly pretence of ſorrow for the ſins and the ignorance of the times, and the duty incumbent upon us, to exerciſe the power that Chriſt hath committed to us, for edification and not for deſtruction, and that theſe are but ſo many waſte Papers, wherein Presbytery is wrapped up

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to make it look more handſomely and paſs more currantly. We do earneſtly deſire, That in the examination of your conſciences, you would ſeriouſly conſider, whether you have not both tranſgreſſed the rules of Charity in paſſing ſuch hard cenſures upon us, and alſo uſurped that, which belongs not to you, in making your ſelves judges of what fals not under your cognizance. The things you mention belonging only to be tried by your and our Maſter, to whom we muſt all ſtand or fall. *But we are heartily ſorry, that Presbytery (which ſtands in no need of any painting or cover to make it look more handſomely and paſſe more currantly) ſhould be accounted by you the* anguis in herba, whereof you had need to beware, it having never given that offence to any, as to merit ſuch language.

But now you frame an objection out of our Paper, and return your Anſwer, profeſſing, *That you pray for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch Church Government throughout his Highneſs Dominions, as is conſonant to the will of God and univerſall practice of primitive Churches,* &c. In that you do here joyn the will of God and the univerſal practiſe of primitive Churches together, as you joyned the Word of God and the conſtant practiſe of the Catholique Church before, you ſeem to us, to make up the rule (whereby we muſt judge what Government it is, that you pray might be eſtabliſhed) of theſe two, *viz.* the will of God and the univerſal practiſe of primitive Churches. Or that it is the univerſal practiſe of primitive Churches. That muſt be our ſure guide and comment upon the Word of God, to tell us, what is his will revealed theſe touching Church Government and diſcipline. If this be your ſenſe (as we apprehend it is) we muſt needs profeſs, that herein we greatly differ from you, as not conceiving it to be ſound and orthodoxe. It being the Word of God alone, and the approved practiſe of the Church recorded there (whether it was the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of the Church or no) that is to be the onely rule to judge by in this, or any other controverſies in matters of Religion. But yet admitting for the preſent the rule you ſeem to make, we ſhould deſire to know from you, what that Church Government is, which is ſo conſonant to the will of God and univerſall practiſe of primitive Churches. For our own parts, we think it will be very hard

for you, or any others, to demonſtrate out of any Records of Antiquity, what was the univerſall practiſe of primitive Churches for the whole ſpace of the firſt 300. years after Chriſt, or the greateſt part thereof (excepting ſo much as is left upon record in the Scriptures of the new Teſtament) the Monuments of Antiquity, that concerne thoſe times (for the greateſt part of them) being both imperfect, and far from ſhewing us, what was the univerſall practiſe of the Church then (though the practiſes of ſome Churches may be mentioned,) and likewiſe very queſtionable. At leaſt it will not be eaſie to aſſure us, that ſome of thoſe, that go under the names of the moſt approved Authors of thoſe times, are neither ſpurious nor corrupted. And hereupon it will unavoidably follow, that we ſhall be left very doubtfull, what Government it is, that is moſt conſonant to the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of primitive Churches for that time. But as touching the rule it ſelf, which you ſeem here to lay down, we cannot cloſe with it. We do much honour and reverence the primitive Churches; But yet we believe we owe more reverence to the Scriptures, then to judge them either imperfect or not to have light enough in themſelves, for the reſolving all doubts touching matters of faith or practiſe, except it be firſt reſolved what was either the concurrent interpretation of the Fathers, or the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of the Churches of thoſe times. Beſides that admitting this for a rule, that the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of the primitive Churches muſt be that, which muſt aſſure us what is the will of God revealed in Scripture concerning the Government which he hath appointed in the Church, our faith is hereupon reſolved into a moſt uncertain ground, and ſo made fallible and turned into opinion. For what monuments of Antiquity, beſides the Scripture, can aſſure us touching the matters of fact therein contained, that they were ſuch indeed, as they are there reported to be? the Authors of them themſelves being men that were not infallibly guided by the Spirit. But yet ſuppoſing we could be infallibly aſſured (which yet never can be) what was the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of the primitive Churches, how ſhall that be a rule to aſſure us, what is moſt conſonant to the will of God? When as we ſee not,

especially in such matters, as are not absolutely necessary to salvation, but that the universall practise of the Churches might in some things be dissonant to the will of God revealed in Scriptures. And so the universall practise of primitive Churches can be no certain rule to judge by, what Church Government is most consonant to the will of God revealed in his Word. We know there are corruptions in the best of men: There was such hot contention betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as caused them to part asunder. *Peter* so failed in his practise, as that though before some came from *James*, he did eat with the Gentils, yet when they were come he withdrew himself, fearing them of the Circumcision. And hereupon not only other Jews dissembled with him, but *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation. Whence it's clear, that the examples of the best men even in those things, wherein they went contrary to the rule of Gods Word, are of a spreading nature, and the better the Persons, that give the bad example, are, the greater the danger of the more universall leavening. Nay we finde, that not only some few Apostolicall men had their failings, but even Apostolicall primitive Churches did, in the very face of the Apostles, they being yet alive, make great defection, both in regard of opinions and practises. As from the examples of the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and the Churches of *Asia* is manifest. The Apostle also tels us, that even in his time, the mystery of iniquity begin to work: And in after times we know, how the Doctrine was corrupted: what gross superstition crept into the Church: what domination was striven for amongst the Pastors and Bishops of the Churches. Till at length Antichrist was got up into his seat, unto which height yet he came not all at once, but by steps and degrees. Besides it is of fresh remembrance, that notwithstanding the reformation happily brought about in our own Church in regard of Doctrine and worship, after those dismall *Marian* times, yet the corruption, in regard of Government continued such, during the time of the late Prelacy (which yet was taken away in other reformed Churches) that the Pastors were deprived of that power of rule, that our Church acknowledgeth did belong to them of right; and which did

Even as a Generall Councill it self is subject to errour.

Gal. 2.

anciently belong to them; however the exerciſe thereof did after grow into a long diſuſe, as hath been ſhewed before. And therefore when we conſider on the one hand, that the ſuperiority, which the Biſhop obtained at the firſt above the Presbyter in the ancient Church (and which was rather obtained *conſuetudine Eccleſiæ* then by Divine right) did at the length grow to that height, that the Paſtors were ſpoiled of all power of rule: ſo we cannot much wonder on the other hand, that the ruling Elder was quite turned out of doors; For the proof of the being and exerciſe of whoſe office in the purer times, there are notwithſtanding produced teſtimonies of the ancients, by Divines both at home and abroad, that have written about that ſubject, and to which we do therein refer you: As there do remain ſome footſteps and ſhadow of their office in the Church-wardens and Sides-men even to this day. And ſo upon the whole, the premiſſes conſidered, and that we are commanded not to follow a multitude to do evill (though it were of the beſt of men) and that therefore the examples and practiſes, though it were of whole Churches, are to be no farther a rule for us, then they follow Chriſt, and as their examples be approved of in the Word of Chriſt, notwithſtanding the univerſality and long continuedneſs of ſuch practiſes. Whereas you ſay, *that you pray for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch Church Government, as is conſonant to the will of God and univerſall practiſe of primitive Churches*; we believe you might cut the matter a great deal ſhorter, and ſay, That you are for the eſtabliſhing of that Government, that is moſt conſonant to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures, and that the Word of God alone (and on which onely Faith muſt be built, and into which at laſt be reſolved, when other records of Antiquity, that yet are not ſo ancient, as it is, have been ſearcht into never ſo much) ſhall determine what that is, and ſo thoſe weariſome and endleſs diſputes, about what is the univerſall and conſtant practiſe of primitive Churches (and which if it could be found out in any good meaſure of probability for the firſt 300. years after Chriſt, could never yet be ſo farr iſſued, as to be a ſure bottom, whereon our faith may ſafely reſt) may be cut off. It being a moſt certain rule, and eſpecially in matters of faith,

that

that the *Factum* is not to prescribe against the *Jus*; The *Practice* against the *Right* or what ought to be done. And it being out of all question the safest course for all, to bring all doctrine and practices to the sure and infallible Standard and Touch-stone, the Word of God alone. And after you have more seriously weighed the matter, and remember how you professe, that in the matters you propose in your Paper, *You rest not in the Judgment or determination of any general Council of the Eastern or Western Churches, determining contrary, to what you are perswaded is so fully warranted in the Word of God, as well as by the constant practice of the Catholick Church*; (although what that was, were more likely to be resolved by a general Council then by your selves) the proposal of having the Word of God alone to be the Judg of the Controversie about Church-Government, cannot (wee think) in reason be deny'd by you.

And wee with you shall heartily pray, That the Church-Government, which is most consonant to the will of God revealed in Scriptures, might be established in these Lands. Although wee must also professe, that wee believe, that that Government, which is established by Authority, and which wee exercise, is, for the substantials of it, this Government, & which wee judg also to be most consonant to the practice of the primitive Churches in the purest times. And therefore as there was some entrance made by the late Parliament, in regard of establishing this Government by Ordinances, as the Church-Government of these Nations: And as to the putting those Ordinances in execution, there hath been some beginning in the Province of *London*, the Province of this County, and in some other places throughout the Land: So when there shall be the opportunity offered, wee shall not be wanting by petitioning or otherwayes to use our best endeavors, that it may be fully settled throughout these Lands. That so wee may not, as to Government in the Church, any longer continue as a City without walls, and a Vineyard without an hedg, and so (to the undoing of our posterity) endanger Religion to be quite lost. And upon which consideration wee do earnestly desire, that all conscientious and moderate spirited men throughout the Land, though of different principles, whether of the Episcopal or Congregational way,

would

would bend themſelves ſo farr as poſſibly they can to accommodate with us in point of practice: In which there was ſo good a progreſſe made by the late Aſſembly, as to thoſe that were for the Congregational way: And, as wee think, alſo all thoſe that were for the lawfulneſſe of ſubmiſſion to the Government of the late Prelacy, as it was then exerciſed: And that are of the Judgment of the lare Primate of *Ireland* in his reduction of Epiſcopacy unto the form of Synodical Government, (mentioned before) might do, if they would come up towards us ſo farr, as wee judg their principles would allow them: As wee do alſo profeſſe, that however wee cannot conſent to part with the Ruling Elder, unleſſe wee ſhould betray the truth of Chriſt *Rom.* 12. 1 *Cor.*12. 1 *Tim.*5. (as wee judge,) and dare not give any like conſent to admit of a moderate Epiſcopacy, for fear of encroachments upon the Paſtors right, and whereof late ſad experience leſſons us to beware, as wee judg alſo, that the ſuperiority of a Biſhop above a Presbyter in degree (which ſome maintain) is no Apoſtolical inſtitution, and ſo have the greater reaſon in that reſpect to caution againſt it: Yet wee do here profeſſe, wee ſhould ſo farr, as will conſiſt with our principles and the peace of our own conſciences, be ready to abate or tolerate much for peace ſake. That ſo at the length all parties throughout the Land, that have any ſoundneſſe in them in matters of faith, and that are ſober and godly, though of different judgments in leſſer matters, being weary of their diviſions, might fall in the necks one of another with mutual embraces and kiſſes, and ſo at laſt (through the tender mercy of our God, there might be an happy cloſure of breaches, and reſtoring of peace and union in this poor, unſettled, rent, and diſtracted Church, to the glory of God throughout all the Churches.

But now as to you, and what follows in your Paper, (and in the mean ſeaſon, till this can be accompliſhed, and for which wee ſhall heartily pray) wee cannot but judg, that ſuch as are within our bounds, *and live as lawleſſe perſons contemning the commands of God, and ſo out of their rank and order*, (and of which ſort you deny not, but that there may be ſome among us, however they be ſubject to Law, and the puniſhment of the Civil Sword, as needs they muſt be) yet being ſuch as are juſtly cenſurable,

censurable, according to the rules of our Government, wee do not think they are thereby exempted from being reached by that *Ecclesiastical Sword*, as you phrase it, which both God and the Civil Authority hath intrusted us with.

And as wee are farr from contemning the Authority of the Civil Magistrate, and shall therefore (out of due respect unto it, and that the lawlesse might be curbed) be ready, not onely our selves, as wee have a call; but also warn others, as there may be occasion, to make complaint to the Civil Power, that so such offenders, being punished by corporal and pecuniary mulcts, to the suppression of wickednesse and licentiousnesse, and the *Reformation of mens lives and maners*; Yet wee do not apprehend why this should hinder us from *warning the Members of our several Congregations to make complaint to the Eldership of those, that walk disorderly and will not be reclaimed, to the end they may be further dealt with, as the nature of their offence may deserve.* Wee being fully assured from the word of truth, That Excommunication is Gods ordinance, appointed for the reformation of the scandalous, and as you your selves acknowledged in the beginning of your Paper: and being a spiritual punishment for the nature and kinde of it, through the blessing of God, may be more available for the destruction of the flesh, and the thorough humiliation of the offender, then any corporal or pecuniary mulct (that reaches but the outward man) can be; And as it was blessed with great successe for this end for many years together, whilest the Church was destitute of Christian Magistrates: Although in a Christian State wee see not, why wee should divide what God hath joyned together. Wee having not yet learned either from the Scriptures or sound reason, that the conjunction of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Sword is not more likely, through the same blessing of God, to work a greater reformation in mens lives, then either of them alone, remembring that old Maxime, *Vis unita fortior*. And as touching our selves, and the power wee are intrusted to exercise, wee shall commit our endeavors unto his blessing, in the use of his own appointed means who is able, and wee doubt not but hee will, make the same effectual for the ends for which hee hath appointed them.

But

But you ſay, *There are other parts of our Paper, that do likewiſe remain dark, which you deſire to be made plain.* Although wee conceive not ſo of them, yet wee ſhall as willingly go along with you, to give you further anſwer, as you to deſire the ſame of us.

And therefore whereas wee having ſaid in our Paper, *That there are many perſons of all ſorts, that will not ſubmit themſelves to the preſent Government of the Church.* Your firſt Quære thereupon is, *Why Government in ſingulari?* Wee anſwer, becauſe it is the onely Government, that at preſent is eſtabliſhed in this Church by Civil Authority; The Prelatical being put down, and cautioned againſt in the humble Advice, in regard of any liberty to be extended to it for the exerciſe thereof: And there being no other Government but the Presbyterian (which is our Government) that is owned (as the Church-Government for the whole Nation) by the Civil Authority. And as it is that, which wee judg to be moſt agreeable to the will of God, ſo alſo wee conceive, that whatever is of Chriſts preſcribing in any other different Government (whether Epiſcopal or Congregational) is to be found here: As wee do apprehend the redundancies of them both to be taken away in this, and the defects of them both to be here ſupplyed. And however there may be differences amongſt godly men concerning Church-Government, which it is that Chriſt *in particulari* hath preſcribed in his Word, yet wee judg that the Government which Chriſt hath preſcribed in his Word is but one; As all thoſe muſt ſay ſo too, that not being Eraſtians do hold, That one Church-Government or other is of divine Right.

But whereas you bring in *Calvin* ſaying, *Scimus enim unicuique Eccleſiæ, &c.*

To this wee ſay; The circumſtantials of Government, that are but matters of order onely, and which muſt be ſuited to the time, or place, or perſons, for whom they are made, and concerning which (if you had quoted the place where *Calvin* uſeth theſe words) wee believe it would appear hee ſpeaks; theſe being variable, and ſo but the accidentals of Government, may not be one and the ſame in all Churches. But if Chriſt have preſcribed a Government in his word; for the ſubſtantials of

ir,

it, it must needs be *de jure* one & the same in every Church. And that the Presbyterian Government is that in particular, which is there prescribed, in *Calvins* judgment, is so manifest by his works to the whole Christian world, that it needs no proof. But if the Government, which Christ hath prescribed, for the substantials of it be onely one, then that alone is good, and all other Governments differing substantially from it must needs be bad; and this onely *jure divino*, and Christs own Government, and the rest not.

And therefore, whereas in the next place you suppose, *Wee may assert, that our Government, is the Government by way of Eminency, as Christs own Government, more immediately, and* jure divino. To this and to what you further hereupon do inquire, wee say, wee have declared already; That wee call'd it the present Government, because it is the onely Government setled in the Church by the Civil Power. But whether it be the Government by way of Eminency and *jure divino*, that was not the thing referred unto in the phrase wee used. And as to the resolving of your doubts and scruples, wee conceive it is here for us not material to go about the proving of the *Jus divinum* of it; wee having proved, That it is the Government that is established by the Civil Magistrate, and which doth lay as good a foundation to evidence the lawfulnesse of your submission to it, as for the lawfulnesse of your submission to the former Government, (and touching which wee suppose you were satisfied) your exceptions lying as much against the High-Commissioners, Chancellors, and Commissaries then, as they can do now against the office of Ruling Elders, and which is the chief thing wee apprehend is stumbled at in our Government.

But yet if you desire to have satisfaction given you touching that which wee are not ashamed to professe, *viz.* the *Jus divinum* of the Presbyterian Government, wee referr you to what is so fully spoken touching this point, by sundry learned Divines both of our own Church, and the Reformed Churches abroad, that wee know not, what can be added more [a].

[a] *The Assemblies Propositions about Church-Government. The* Jus Divinum *by* London *Ministers. The Provincial* Synod *of* London *their vindication of the Presbyterian Government.* Rutherfords *due right of Presbyteries.* Aarons *Rod, by* Gillaspie.

And yet wee do not say, That there is no present Government in any Church or Assembly of Saints, but where our Discipline and Government is erected intirely in all the parts of it, no more then wee should deny him to be a man, in whom there were a defect of some integral parts, or in whom there were some superfluous members. But as when Antichristianism so overspread the face of the Church in those dark times before the Reformation, God preserved a Church, Ministery and Ordinances, though not without the mixture of many corruptions in doctrine and worship, even amongst the Papists themselves; So there was some of Christs Government and Discipline in the worst times, though not intirely, nor without the mixture of much corruption in that Discipline and Government. And yet if you consult Antiquity, you will not finde, that the Presbyterian Government hath lyen hid so long, as that for the space of 1500 years it could never be found till this present. You have heard what rule did anciently belong to Presbyters, notwithstanding that through the corruptions, that crept into the Church in after times, the exercise of that power was long disused. And the like may be said of Ruling Elders, and as hath been shewed by others. But it is what *de jure* ought to be, and not what *de facto* is or hath been, which is that, which you and wee are chiefly to attend, and concerning which the Scripture must be the onely Judg, as wee have said before.

But you say, now subjection to our present Government is required by us; and then demand, *Whether all that observe not our rank and order, and subject not themselves to our present Government, must be taken for lawlesse persons? for so,* say you, *doth this close connexion of ours seem to import*; viz. *Many who do not subject, but live, &c.*

But here you do reason fallaciously *à bene conjunctis ad male divisa*: For in our Paper wee speak of such, as did *live in a sinfull and total neglect of the Lords Supper: That were scandalous and offensive in their lives, drunkards, unclean persons, and that will not subject themselves to the present Government, but live as lawlesse persons.* And therefore the lawlesse persons wee meant (and as might plainly have been gathered from our words) were such, who as they subjected not themselves to the present Government

vernment of the Church, ſo they were alſo ſcandalous and offenſive in their lives, wee joyning theſe altogether, whom you divide. And whether ſuch as will neither ſubmit themſelves to the Laws of God, nor the Government, that is ſettled in the Church by the Civil Power, be not lawleſſe perſons, we leave it to you to judg.

But yet we do here alſo minde you, That however we do not judg all thoſe to be lawleſſe perſons, that do out of conſcience not come up to the obſervation of all thoſe Rules, which are or ſhall be eſtabliſhed by Authority for regulating the outward worſhip of God, and Government of this Church (being otherwiſe blameleſſe) yet both you and wee may well remember, that ſuch as ſhould have refuſed to have ſubjected themſelves to the late Prelatical Government, would have been accounted in thoſe times to have been lawleſſe perſons.

But you ſay, *When wee make it an Order, that notice ſhall be taken of all perſons, that forſake the publick Aſſemblies of the Saints, you would gladly know, how farr wee extend this Saintſhip, this Church, and Aſſembly of Saints?*

To which wee anſwer, as farr as the Apoſtle did, when writing to the Church of *Corinth* and the Churches of *Galatia* hee calls them *Saints* and *Churches*; notwithſtanding there were ſome in thoſe Churches that were leavened with unſound doctrine and groſly erroneous: In *Corinth*, ſome that denied the Reſurrection, made rents and ſchiſms, and ſundry groſly ſcandalous: In the Churches of *Galatia*, ſuch as mixed works with Faith in the point of Juſtification, and of which the Apoſtle *Paul* would have thoſe Churches to take notice, even to the cenſuring of them, they being ſpots to thoſe Aſſemblies; and however Saints by profeſſion, and in regard of outward calling, being in Covenant with God, and having been baptized, yet anſwered not their profeſſion by ſuitable converſation. And therefore, however there be ſundry of the like ſtamp in our Aſſemblies, wee do not therefore unchurch them, or make our Aſſemblies not the Aſſemblies of Saints, becauſe of the corruption of ſuch members.

And ſeeing our principles and practices are manifeſtly known to be utterly againſt the opinions and practices of the

Donatists of old, and those that have of late rent themselves from our Churches, because of the scandalousnesse of the corrupt members, that are found in them, (though the sin of these in our Churches is aggravated by giving that occasion) you might well have spared your pains in transcribing out of *Augustine*, what hee justly said unto those schismaticks, that hee had to deal with. Nay, you might rather have gathered from our Paper; That seeing wee said, that notice should be taken of all those that should forsake the publick Assemblies of the Saints, our purpose was to have censured such as the Donatists were; That wee purposed to observe and censure those that did maintain and hold up private meetings in opposition to the publick; That crie down our Churches and publick Assemblies, Ministery and Ordinances, (as you know several sorts do; and who, as they hold sundry grosse errors, that subvert the faith, so in regard of those and other their practices, that in their own nature do manifestly subvert the order, unity, and peace, that Christ hath established in his Church) do justly fall under Church censure, according to the rules of our Government above mentioned. And that therefore wee were not altogether silent concerning either the sin or punishment of such, as did err grosly in doctrinals or in discipline, so as to make such dangerous rents from the Church, as the fore-named Sectaries do: Contrary to what you say of us in your Paper. And further, by such as forsake the publick Assemblies of the Saints, of whom wee said notice should be taken, you might have gathered our meaning was, that such (of which sort there are but too many amongst us) who out of a principle of carelesnesse, sloth, worldlinesse or manifest prophanenesse, do on the Lords day either idle out the time, or else are worse imployed, when they should resort to the publick Assemblies: and who, as they are no friends to any private meetings for the good of their souls, in the use of any private means of conference or prayer for that end: So they do also Atheistically turn their backs on all the publick Ordinances, forsaking them and the Assemblies, where these are dispensed, should be taken notice of in order to censure, if there was not reformation; and to neither of which sort of persons any indulgence is granted by any Laws of the Land, that wee know

know of. And if you had gathered thus much from our Paper, as your miſtake had been far the leſs, ſo your Charity had been the more, then to have reckoned us in the number of ſuch Perſons, as the *Donatiſts* were. And yet we did not mean, That we intended to take notice in order unto cenſure of ſuch, who being found in the faith, and godly in life (though differing from us in point of Diſcipline and Government) had their diſtinct Aſſemblies from ours, they indeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace: They not being cenſurable by the rules of our Government, as is manifeſt, by what we have declared before. Although we remember, how all that ſubmitted not to the former Government, were counted ſchiſmatical. Neither did we reckon theſe in the number of the lawleſs Perſons, we ſpeak of, who ſubjected not themſelves to our Government, and whom we account to be parts of the univerſal viſible Church militant here on earth, however they have alſo their publique Aſſemblies diſtinct from ours, though ſundry of them, as there is occaſion, reſort to ours alſo. But how we ſhould hereupon make either theſe or the lawleſs Perſons, that we ſpeak of, members of the inviſible Triumphant Church (all which we have reckoned to belong to the viſible) they muſt have eyes quicker then Eagles, that can diſcern how this follows, and therefore there is no fear our Charity ſhould ſo far over-reach, as you ſuppoſed it might.

But ſtill you are unſatisfied; For you know not, it ſeems, what we mean by the word (*Publique*) *the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints*. By our profeſſions and practiſes in our owning the publique Aſſemblies, and where the publique Ordinances of the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer are diſpenced, which we our ſelves do conſtantly frequent and ſtir up others to frequent alſo, it was plain enough, what we meant by publique Aſſemblies. And we are heartily ſorry, that you underſtanding our meaning, as is clear by what you ſay anon, ſhould by this but make your way to give a laſh at our *Private meetings*, which are none of them ſuch, as we need to be aſhamed of. And which, when we meet, either for conference about matters of Religion, or to pray together, and humble our ſelves for our own ſins and the ſins of theſe times; When there is not the opportunity

portunity of a publique Aſſemby; or when perſonal or Family occaſions call for a private, is ſurely as commendable, at the leaſt, as a private meeting upon domeſtical, civil, or political occaſions: and therefore not to be ſecretly girded at. And on the other hand, we do not meddle with the cenſuring of thoſe, who being godly and ſound in the faith, in the main points of Religion, do yet differ from us in judgement, in matters of Diſcipline and Government: And have their Aſſemblies for Gods publique worſhip diſtinct from ours, as we are barred from it by the rules of our Government, as we have often ſaid before. And therefore we leave room enough for Conſciences that are truely tender. Though we cannot ſay ſo much for the Prelatical Government.

Neither do we tranſgreſs any Laws of the Land which have made no proviſion to except any Perſons, that we meddle with, and are made cenſurable by the rules laid down in the form of Church Government, nor have we *under Colour of Authority made any Laws and Edicts*, but according to that power, that the civil Authority hath committed to us, have onely openly given notice in our ſeveral Congregations, of what offences are cenſurable by the rules of our Government, that the offenders might take heed, they incurre not that cenſure of Excommunication, which Authority hath awarranted us to inflict upon the obſtinate and otherwiſe incorrigible. And therefore (except to execute what we are appointed to do by the civil power be to contemn it) we cannot be thought to have done any thing in contempt of the civil power, as it is not our ignorance of the Laws in force (that, we are confident, being grounded in reaſon fight not one againſt another, and which is your more charitable and favourable conſtruction) that hath led us into any practiſes, that are tranſgreſſions of them. And therefore though you much queſtion (upon what account ſoever it be, that we have been led into what we have acted) and think it concernes us to look to it, *whether we have not run our ſelves* into a premunire. Yet we are aſſured, we are as ſufficiently ſecured againſt that danger, as all the Juſtices in the Land are, that have acted upon other Ordinances of Parliament, which they have judged to be in force, as we do alſo thoſe

to

to be, that have been the ground of our proceedings.

But you have yet further to except, for whereas we ſaid, *That like notice ſhould be taken of all ſcandalous Perſons.* Your next Quære is, *Whether thoſe, that forſake the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints in the ſecond order, may not be taken for ſcandalous Perſons comprehended in the third order?*

Here we perceive you underſtood, who were meant by thoſe, that did forſake the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints, *viz.* Thoſe who forſaking the Aſſemblies, where the publique Ordinances were diſpenſed, were upon that account really and indeed ſcandalous, and ſo being comprehended under the latitude of that expreſſion, might juſtly merit to be cenſured as ſcandalous Perſons. And thus conceiving you were not miſtaken, yet we, who were to expreſs our ſelves popularly, and ſo as we might be underſtood, conſidering ſome of that ſtamp, though they forſook the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints, and conſtantly turned their backs as on the Lords Supper, ſo on all other Ordinances, yet if not drunkards and ſwearers, whoremaſters, *&c.* did not take themſelves to be ſcandalous Perſons. Do not think, that in this we are any more to be blamed by you (we uſing variety of expreſſions onely for this end, that we might be better underſtood) then we blame Lawyers and Attorneys, and wherein we judge them not to be blame worthy) for uſing variety of expreſſions and Multiplicity of *Synonymous* Words to make the matter more clear and out of doubt, where yet one and the ſame thing is underſtood by all.

But now hereupon your complaint is; *That we burden you with Traditions in multiplying of orders* ſine neceſſitate ad Arthritim uſque; *and cry out,* Quare oneramini ritibus? *And tell us of lengthning out our Paper, which yet is not by theſe few words hereuſed made very much longer.*

But if you had remembred the multitude of Canons and burthenſom Ceremonies, that were rigorouſly preſſed, even to the higheſt cenſure in Caſe of refuſall, and under the burthen whereof ſundry truely conſcientious Perſons under the late Prelacy did ſigh and groan: When thoſe, that were ſcandalous enough in their lives, eſcaped cenſure (and which ſome have cauſe not ſo ſoon to forget) we think you would have ſeen little

tle reaſon to have complained of our burthening you with traditions, in multiplying orders unneceſſarily.

And now we come to your laſt charge, which as it is very high, ſo we judge it hath in it as little reaſon for the bearing it up.

You ſay; *After the ſecond and third Orders againſt thoſe, that forſake the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints and ſuch as are ſcandalous, comes in a fourth touching the Catechumeni in the firſt Order mentioned*, viz. *That the Miniſter, when he Catechizeth the ſeverall Families*, &c.

But here in the firſt place we obſerve, you omit to mention the firſt part of this Order, and unto which, that which follows in the two next Orders, doth refer. And in the next place you deſcant upon this latter branch of it only. For you ſay, *But what if they will not preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip? The Miniſter muſt exhort and admoniſh them.*

But that is wholly of your own adding. Yet you go on and ſay, *But what if they ſtill refuſe? Their names ſhall be publiſhed openly in the ſeveral Congregations, and they warned before all to reform.* So you affirm that we ſay, though you prove it not, as we ſhall ſhew you anon. But here you call for attention and ſay. *Mark! Men of blameleſs life and knowledge muſt be warned before all to reform.* If we either had practiſed any ſuch thing, or any ſuch conſtruction, either from the rules of Grammer or Logick, or common reaſon, could have been put upon the words, we uſed in our Paper, you might have called for this attention; that ſo ſuch a Government as this, and the Perſons mannaging it, might have been caſt out both together, and no where tolerated in the Chriſtian World. Although we have not forgotten the time, when under the late Prelacy, many godly and orthodox Miniſters, and ſundry knowing and conſcientious Chriſtians, were far worſe uſed, then to have only their names publiſhed in the Congregations, and they warned to conform to the orders then appointed in the Church. The Miniſters being ſuſpended from their Miniſtery, to the unſpeakable loſs of their congregations, and the undoing of themſelves and their Families. And they alſo often times as well as private Chriſtians (that were none of the worſt members of

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the Congregations) caſt out as unſavoury ſalt; *And the great Excommunication, which caſteth out of the Church, and judgeth them no better then Heathens and Publicans, notwithſtanding all their piety and knowledge*; to uſe your own expreſſions. And we may adde, notwithſtanding the very great uſe fullneſs of ſundry of ſuch for the Church of God, was inflicted on them, and all becauſe they could not in all points conform themſelves to the Government and orders then on foot, and which all Godly, moderate, conformable men then thought might have been well ſpared, and the Church in thoſe times as well governed and ordered, with out them, as by the retaining of them. If you had to deal with thoſe Perſons, you might well have called for that attention, which here you do.

But yet you go on further ſtill and ſay. *But what if after all this they will not reform, but continue obſtinate? Then*, ſay you, *no admiſſion to the Sacrament, for that*, you ſay, *is implyed in the fourth order; and that here is our* Excommunicatio minor. But yet you drive on your charge higher ſtill; for you adde. *But that's not all, an higher cenſure yet, they ſhall be caſt out and Excommunicate.* For ſo, ſay you, *ſaith the ſixth and laſt order, the great Excommunication, which caſteth out of the Church alſo, and judgeth them no better then Heathens and Publicans, notwithſtanding all their piety and knowledge.* And when you have driven up your charge to the height, you conclude and tell us, what the upſhot of our reſolves comes to, which is this, as you ſay, *viz. In brief all willfully ignorant* (though we ſpeak not one tittle of their cenſure at all) *and ſcandalous are to be Excommunicate, and not onely they, but the knowing and blameleſs of life alſo, if they preſent not themſelves to the Elderſhip.*

But here we ſee partly prejudice againſt the Elderſhip, and Perſons preſenting themſelves before it, in order to their Admiſſion to the Sacrament, and partly your unacquaintedneſs with the Rules of the Presbyterian Government, hath impoſed upon you, thus far, as to force upon us ſuch a conſtruction of our Words, as never came into our own thoughts. It was an exhortation onely to theſe, that was appointed to be given to the Perſons Catechized to preſent them-

ſelves to the Elderſhip, and no more. Not ſo much as an Admonition in order to any further cenſure in caſe not hearkened unto. And here we obſerve that this is one main ground of your miſtake, that you do not diſtinguiſh betwixt an Admonition, that is in order to a further cenſure, if it prevaile not (and which was mentioned in the firſt part of the 4th Order, and which you wholly omit) and an exhortation; but confound theſe together, taking them for one and the ſame, and which is here a radical and grand miſtake. For doubtleſs in a thouſand caſes, that might be inſtanced in, there may be place for an exhortation, when though ineffectual, there is no place for an Admonition, that is in order to a further Church cenſure in caſe of obſtinacy, as it is taken by us here. Men may be exhorted to examine and prove themſelves, whether they be in the faith: to ſelf examination before they come to the Lords Table: to grow in Grace and in the know ledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: to keep their hearts with all diligence, and to infinite more things of the like nature, and which are duties, they ſhould apply themſelves unto. When yet there is no room for an admonition, in order to any Church cenſure, in caſe it be not obeyed. Nay, when men may perceive there is not that care that ſhould be in Perſons, in regard of ſome of their Words and carriages, there may be place for an exhortation, and yet for no Admonition in order to any Church cenſure, in caſe the exhortation be not hearkned unto: if there be not any further ſcandalous out-breakings of corruption, that may juſtly merit it. *Church cenſures are not to paſs upon men for every fault; nor againſt ſuch as be guilty of ſuch ſins of infirmity, as are commonly found in the Children of God.* As in that caſe by the rules of our Government it is provided againſt. And yet an exhortation to watchfullneſs and vigilancy in ſuch caſes is not uſeleſs. And ſo it may well be appointed by us, that the Miniſter ſhould exhort ſuch, as are found by him to be Perſons of knowledge, and are in converſation blameleſs, to preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, that ſo they might be regularly and orderly admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper (an Ordinance that is not to be ſleighted, as it is by many, but upon too ſleight grounds, as they will be found

found to be, when they come to be tried in the day of account) and yet no proceedings by Church cenſures againſt ſuch Perſons, in caſe ſuch an exhortation prevaile not. And but that we ſee you are poſſeſſed with too much prejudice againſt the Elderſhip, we ſhould much have wondred; that you, who in the beginning of your Paper tell us, had ſeriouſly weighed ours, ſhould here in the cloſe have run into ſuch a great miſtake, as not to have diſtinguiſhed betwixt the Perſons, that were to be admoniſhed in order to further cenſure, if they hearkened not thereunto, and the Perſons that were to be exhorted onely. If that, which led you into this miſtake, was the conſideration, that they were both joyned together in the ſame order, and therefore were both to be dealt with after the ſame manner, your argument was very weak, there being nothing more frequent in Scripture and all other Authors, then to couple together in one and the ſame verſe and ſentence things of a different nature. But if that had been your ground of doubting, yet if you had attended to what preſently followed, there had been no place for ſtumbling in ſo plain a matter. For that which follows is ſo limited, that it could not with any colour be applied to thoſe, that being exhorted by the Miniſter to preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, ſhould ſtill refuſe. For it ſpeaks expreſſely of ſuch, that ſhould neither hearken to private Admonition nor the Admonition of the Elderſhip, that their names ſhould be publiſhed openly in the Congregation, and therefore of thoſe onely, who had been appointed to be admoniſhed according to Chriſts rule *Mat.* 18. in the fourth Order.

Now the Perſons, that were to be admoniſhed according to the rule of Chriſt *Mat.* 18. and ſpoken of in the fourth Order were onely ſuch, as had been mentioned immediately before, *viz.* Such as ſhould forſake the publique Aſſemblies, and ſuch as were ſcandalous Perſons. But yet to make the matter ſtill more plain, let it be conſidered, that it could not with any ſhew of reaſon be conſtrued to be our meaning; that ſuch Perſons, who were found to be of competent knowledge and blameleſs in life, if not harkening to the Miniſter exhorting them to preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip, were to have

their names publiſhed; and if ſtill refuſing, then to be excommunicated. For the Perſons, that were to be thus deale with, were to be admoniſhed by the Elderſhip, and reject that Admonition, before there were to be thoſe further proceedings. But how could ſuch Perſons, that being exhorted by the Miniſter to preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip and refuſed to come before them, be admoniſhed by them?

But if you ſay, the Perſons, that the Miniſter is to exhort to preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip, are mentioned immediately before this order made touching the publiſhing of mens names, and therefore muſt needs be included in this order, and the relative (*they*) be referred to theſe, as well as to the other. This Argument alſo is very weak. For thoſe amongſt you, that are Scholars, do well know; That the Relative is often referred to the remoter Antecedent, and muſt be ſo of neceſſity, when the ſubject matter ſpoken of doth neceſſarily require it, as in this caſe, it is clear it doth. For the Relative (*They*) in the fifth order is limitted to ſuch, as ſhould neither hearken to private Admonition, nor to the Admonition of the Elderſhip, and theſe were onely the ſcandalous and the forſakers of publique Aſſemblies, that were to be admoniſhed according to Chriſts rule *Mat.* 18. and which was that, which was appointed by the former branch of the fourth order.

But you will perhaps ſay, if this was our meaning, why is the Miniſters exhorting of knowing and blameleſs Perſons to preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip, mentioned in the ſame order with thoſe, that are to be admoniſhed in order to further cenſure, in caſe the Admonition be not hearkened to, if the ſame rule be not to be held with them, as with the others in caſe of refuſall? To which we ſay; The Admonition ſpoken of in the fourth order (is ſaid expreſſely) ſhould be according to the rule of Chriſt *Mat.* 18. Now that mentions not onely an Admonition to be given by the Church, when the caſe is brought thither, but alſo an Admonition once or twice by private Perſons. And therefore, as when the fitteſt opportunity is offered to private Perſons to perform this duty of Admonition toward an offending Brother, they are to lay hold upon it and not let it ſlip; ſo we judged it a fit opportunity offered to

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the Miniſter, when he Catechizeth the Families, to exhort ſuch amongſt them, whom he found to be of competent knowledge, and were blameleſs in life, to preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip in order to their Admiſſion to the Sacrament. And the rather, becauſe having the opportunity of conference with them at this time, if they had any doubts about this matter, or he ſaw, that it was prejudice onely in them againſt the Elders, that hindered them (and as it is in moſt) he might indeavour to remove them. And this might have been eaſily conceived was the reaſon thereof by any, that had but ſeriouſly weighed, what we had expreſſed in our Paper, if there had been that candor, that we could have deſired. And therefore we cannot imagine, what there ſhould be in our Paper, that ſhould give the leaſt juſt occaſion for ſuch a ſtrange ſenſe, as you would herein put upon us. And we hope all indifferent and unprejudiced Perſons will ſay, we have given as little occaſion by our Carriages, as there is given by our words. We have ſtudied all wayes of condeſcenſion for the gaining of all; That neither the weak might be diſcouraged, nor any that can with any colour pretend to tenderneſs of Conſcience in the matter of preſenting themſelves before the Elderſhip, have any bar put in the way of their Communicating with us at the Lords Table, in regard of that order, that is obſerved for their Admiſſion. But we finde, that the Elderſhip is that great ſtumbling block with many. And we are ſorry, that we have reaſon to complain; that, Let's do what we can, yet ſome will be ſatisfied with nothing, but pulling down the hedge, and laying all common. But we dare not thus far ſeek to pleaſe men, though we deſire to pleaſe our neighbour for his good to edification.

We have thus far removed all imaginable grounds in our apprehenſions for this your groundleſs charge. That our purpoſe was to excommunicate all knowing and blameleſs Perſons, if they preſented not themſelves before the Elderſhip. We ſhall now proceed to examine what you produce for the ſupporting of your ſelves in it. And that, which we finde in the firſt place, is (beſides your omitting to take any notice of the firſt branch of this fourth order) ſomething in your comment upon our words, which was not in our Text. For you ſay;

What,

What, if after the Miniſter hath exhorted them, they ſhall not preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip? The Miniſter, ſay you, *muſt exhort and admoniſh them.* But this, as we have told you, is wholly your own, and none of ours. For firſt, though we do not deny, that, if upon the firſt exhortation, they do not preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, it being in order to their regular and orderly Admiſſion to the Lords Supper, the Miniſter may exhort, and exhort them again, becauſe they continue in the neglect of that, which is their duty, yet there was no ſuch thing ſaid by us. But then to make the ground of your charge ſomething more colourable, you added another word, which was not at all uſed by us. We ſaid the Miniſter was to exhort, and that was all. But you adde and ſay. *He ſhall exhort and admoniſh.* But we have told you before, to exhort and admoniſh are different things. And we leave it to indifferent Judges to conſider, whether this be a candid and fair way of arguing even in the Schools; much leſs ſhould it have been made uſe of, when it is brought in to bear up the weight of ſo heavy a charge, as you here put up againſt us. And this is the main foundation, whereupon all the reſt is built. But your ground work being ſo unſure, what you build thereon muſt needs fall. Yet you go on to make it good, as far as you can, and therefore do further adde and ſay. *But what, if they ſtill refuſe? Their names,* ſay you, *ſhall be publiſhed,* &c. But what's your proof for this? *That's,* ſay you, *the fifth Order.* But here you quite miſtake your mark, and therefore when you have conſidered it, your ſelves will not wonder, you ſhould ſhoot ſo wide. For the fifth Order ſpeaks only of Perſons, that have been privately admoniſhed, and alſo admoniſhed by the Elderſhip. Of which the former branch of the fourth order ſpeaks. And what ſort of Perſons that refers to, is manifeſt from our Paper, and hath been by us ſhewed before, that it cannot by any good Rules of conſtruction be referred to the Perſons, that the Miniſter is to exhort, and which is the latter branch of the fourth Order. And this link of your chain being thus broken, the reſt of it, which follows, muſt needs of it ſelf fall in ſunder. So that we need to adde no more.

And

And ſo we have done with the examination of what you have preſented to us in your Paper.

But we do not finde, that you have diſcovered to us any thing in ours, that is not ſound and orthodox; and for which therefore there is any juſt reaſon, why any thing in it ſhould lye ſadly on your ſpirits and Conſciences. But we hope, after you have ſeriouſly weighed, what is here preſented, you may receive ſo much ſatisfaction, as to ſee you have no juſt cauſe to forbear joyning with us upon any grounds you have here made known. We have been willing to put our ſelves upon ſome pains in this our large Anſwer; And if it attain the deſired end, we ſhall not account it ill beſtowed. If yet you ſhould reſt unſatisfied, we deſire you let us know, what it is you ſtumble at; And though in regard of ſundry other imployments, that lye upon us, it cannot be expected, that we, who meet but once a moneth in ordinary, and about other matters, ſhould hold on a courſe of Anſwering you ſtill by writing. Yet we ſhall be ready to appoint, (ſome other way that may be far more ſpeedy, and (we truſt) as effectuall to give you that further ſatisfaction, that it meet and juſt. And now we ſhall intreat, that as our onely aime in this Anſwer hath not been victory, but the clearing up of the Truth; the ſatisfying your ſcruples, and giving you a right underſtanding, in what you were miſtaken, and the vindication of the Government and our ſelves, and hereby the ſetling of Peace and unity in our Congregations, to the Glory of God and edification of the Church: So you would ſhew forth that Candor, as not to put any other conſtruction upon what is here offered to you, And as you ſubſcribe your ſelves our brethren deſireous of Truth, Unity and Peace in the Church; So we ſhall heartily begge of the God of Truth and Peace, that both you and we may all of us in all our tranſactions make it to appear, That we are cordiall and reall in our profeſſions of ſuch deſires, and that he would bleſs theſe and all other our ſincere endeavours, that they may be effectual for the attaining thoſe ends.

Subſcribed in the Name, and by the appointment of the Claſs, by

John Angier, Moderator.

To

To the first Classis at Manchester, *within the Province of* Lancaster, *These.*

Dear Friends, (nay more) Brethren, dearly beloved to us in the Lord;

WE return you hearty thanks, for your Answer, wherein we finde your much Civility towards us, but with too much prolixity. We deny not but there may be some errours, and mistakes and some sharp reflections upon you and your Government, in our Paper, which you charge upon us: In yours also (and that not improbably in one of that bulk) might be discovered some Impertinencies, errours, and mistakes, which we forbear to minde you of, but silently pass over, hoping all will be buried, or covered in that true love, and Charity of Brethren of one and the same Church, and fellowship; In that true love (we say) which covereth a multitude of faults.

We shall make no further Replication to the severall particulars in your Paper, at this time, but onely to one Branch, wherein you refer us to Dr *Bernard.* In the close of whose Book, we meet with one intituled, *The Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of* Synodicall *Government received in the Ancient Church,* By the most Reverend and Learned Father of our Church Dr *James Usher* late Archbishop of *Armagh*, and Primate of all *Ireland* proposed in the year 1641. as an Expedient for the prevention of those troubles, which afterwards did arise, about the matter of Church Government, which you say is the same in substance with yours.

Your

Your words are these, *But if the Antiquity of such Assemblies be that you Question, Then we refer you to what* Dr Bernard *in the Book of his above quoted shews, was the judgement of* Dr Usher (*who is acknowledged by all that knew him, or are acquainted with his works to have been a great Antiquary* (*however we alleadge him not, that you should build your faith on his Testimony*) *And which we think, may be sufficient to vindicate Provinciall Assemblies in your thoughts from the Suspicion of Novelty; In that Book you have in the close of it, proposals touching the Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of* Synodicall *Government received in the Ancient Church. And it thus begins; By the order of the Church of* England, &c. And so you go on quoting several Testimonies of Fathers, and Councils there alleadged, In which you further proceed, and say. *There are Proposals of Assemblies of Pastors within certain limited bounds which saving that they are some what larger then ours, which is but a circumstantiall difference do hold proportion with the Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies mentioned in the form of our Church Government, As also the times propounded there for their meetings the power of these Assemblies,* &c. *and are the same in substance as with us. And all these were propounded as the way of Government in the Ancient Church, and as an Expedient,* &c. as above-said. *And therefore* (for so you conclude) *in the Judgement of this learned, and Reverend Antiquary our Provincial Assembly at* Preston (*where the Pastors of the Church are members, as he acknowledgeth of right they ought to be in such Assemblies, would not have been accounted a new Termed Provincial Assembly.*

Touching all which we shall close and joyn issue with you: we willingly submit our selves to that order, and rule therein Expressed which being that which was received in the Ancient Church, In the Judgement of that Reverend, and learned Antiquary Dr *Usher* (who was so acknowledged by all that knew him, or are acquainted with his works) And also the Assemblies there Expressed, holding proportion with yours, set down in the form of your Church Government, and being the same with yours in substance, and being propoſed as an Expedient for prevention of further troubles, which have

ariſen about the matter of Church Government. We fully expect you ſhould alſo ſubmit your ſelves unto, for peace, and Unities ſake, and ſo we cloſe and meet together as in the middle; And this the rather in regard of thoſe full and free expreſſions of yours to that purpoſe; ſaying, *We reverence* Dr. Bernard *for his moderation and profeſſion of his deſires for peace, wiſhing, That ſuch as do conſent in Subſtantials, for matter of Doctrine, would conſider of ſome Conjunction in point of Diſcipline; That private Intereſts and Circumſtantials might not keep them ſo far aſunder. In which wiſh, as we do cordially joyn our ſelves, ſo we heartily deſire that all godly and moderate ſpirited men throughout the Land, would alſo cloſe.* And in another place you ſay. *However we dare not admit of a moderate Epiſcopacy for fear of encroachings upon the Paſtors right,* &c. *Yet wee do here profeſſe wee ſhould ſo far, as will conſiſt with our principles, and the peace of our own Conſciences, be ready to abate or tolerate much for peace ſake; That ſo at the length, all parties throughout the Land, that have any ſoundneſs in them, in matters of faith, and that are ſober and godly, though of different judgements in leſſer matters, being weary of their diviſions, might fall in the necks of one another, with mutual imbraces and kiſſes, and ſo at laſt through the tender mercy of our God, there might be an happy cloſure of breaches, and reſtoring of peace and union in this poor, unſettled, rent, and diſtracted Church, to the glory of God throughout all Churches.*

Now who are they that diſturbe this our happy cloſure and conjunction? We wiſh not (with the Apoſtle) that they were cut off, but that they were taken away that trouble us, for onely they ſett that will lett until they be taken out of the way, and thoſe are the *Ruling Elders*, as you call them; We ſuppoſe you mean thoſe whom you have choſen out of the Laity, and admitted (without further entring into holy Orders) into the whole exerciſe of Eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, in equal right with the Miniſters of the Goſpel, whom you ſay, You cannot conſent to part with unleſſe you ſhould betray the Truth of Chriſt, *Rom.* 12. 1 *Cor.* 12. 1 *Tim.* 5. and for further Teſtimony referre us to ſome Modern Authors, all of yeſterday.

Now whereas you ſay you cannot part with them unleſs you betray

betray the Truth of Christ (as you judge) By this Parenthesis, we gather, that you are not so wedded to that opinion but you can, and will submit to better reason, when offered to you; And we do again profess to you, that we will not willfully, and pertinaciously, hold a contrary Tenent. And in this confidence we proceed to shew to you, that Lay-Elders are not meant nor mentioned in those Texts by you alledged; Briefly thus, but more largely hereafter, if what is comprehended in this paper be not judged satisfactory.

Run over all the Expositors of holy writ, whether the Fathers in general, or more particular Councils (And *Calvin* saith there can be no better, nor surer remedy for deciding of controversies, no better sense, nor Interpretation of Scripture, than what is given by them in such Councils) or whether the Fathers apart. And first for that Text, *Rom.* 12, hear what Dr. *Andrews* saith, and at your leisure examine the Fathers; *There is no Epistle,* (saith he) *on which so many of the Fathers have writ. Six onely I will name.* Origen, Chrysostome, Theodoret, Ambrose, Jerom, Oecumenius: *All which have treated of it; Let their Commentaries be looked on, upon that place, not one of them applyeth it to the Church Government, which by all likelihood could not be imagined but they would, if that had been the main place for it, nor find those Offices in those words which they in good earnest tell us of,* &c. As much may be said for the other two Texts; Not one Father in their Comments upon them giveth such a sense. Find one Exposition for you, and (which is much) we will yield you all.

Many there are that apply them to the Bishops. And so one for those many of our Modern Doctors we could give you (to answer those modern you quote in behalf of your Elders) of our English Church, Dr. *Fulk* by name we instance in, applying these Texts to the Bishops onely, whom we quote in regard of the moderate judgement he was supposed to be of, in point of Church-government, and therefore more likely to sway with you, than any other we could produce; His words are these. *Amongst the Clergy, for Order, and Government, there was always one principal, to whom by long use of the Church, the name of Bishop or Super-intendent hath been applied, which in Scripture*

is called πρεσβύτερος, ποιμὴν, ἡγούμενος, quoting these Texts, *Rom.* 12. 8. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and *Heb.* 13. 17.

And therefore it can be no betraying of the Truth of Christ, if you will seriously weigh it in the ballance of impartial and unprejudicate reason, to part with them, and to take in the other, but a strengthening, and a backing of it. Wherefore in the name of God, and in the tender bowels of Christ, we beg again and again, beseeching you not to stand upon circumstantials or private interests, But to apply your selves to this happy conjuncture and reconcilement of so many poor Christian Souls, in truth, love, and peace, in this our English Church, in these our days; The blessing that may redound to all parties thus reconciled is unconceiveable; The lives and manners of dissolute persons (and how many there are amongst our selves, of that sort, we are but too too conscious) may by this loving accord, with brotherly admonition and exhortation be reclaimed, or by due censures corrected and amended. Amongst your selves also, many (who returning to their Canonical obedience which they have sworn to) may blot out that charge of Schism that lies upon them: The Church of God continued amongst us from age to age to the end of the world in a Succession of a lawfully ordained Ministry; The Word of God (that Candlestick) fix'd firmly amongst us, which otherwise is on tiptoes, ready to remove west-ward; as our reverend Pastor, in this Church very lately did seem to presage: And we shall happily be freed from the trouble of any further Rejoinder, unto your answer, which otherwise we must do amongst other considerable reasons to take off your Government, from that establishment of authority, upon the proof whereof the most considerable part (as to the bulk) of your answer, doth insist.

Subscribed by us whose names are underwritten by the consent and on the behalf of many others.

Manchester
9. *March.*
1657.

ISAAC ALLEN.
FERDINANDO STANELY.
NICHOLAS MOSELEY.
FRANCIS MOSELEY.
THO. SYMOND.
JOHN OGDEN.

An

An Advertiſement to the Reader.

THe Reader muſt take notice, that upon the Miniſters Anſwer to our firſt Paper, we replied onely in a ſecond ſingle ſheet, conceiving ſome hopes of an amicable and friendly agreement of theſe differences by ſubmitting our ſelves to the Judgement of that Learned Biſhop, Dr. Uſher, whom they ſeem'd to quote for a Patron and Preſident of their Government, if not in all circumſtantials, yet in the ſubſtance & foundation of it; but upon our overtures for a frienaly treaty in order to ſuch a Compoſure, they give us ſome verbal exceptions againſt the laſt paſſage of our Reply, and put us upon that work to invalid their civil Sanction; this is the occaſion of a Reply, and a Rejoynder alſo on our parts, without any farther return from them but onely in words.

To

To the first Class at Manchester, *within the Province of* Lancaster, *These.*

THough we could not but take notice of the prolixity of your last Answer in writing, yet we gave you an acknowledgment of your civility, so far as it related to us, and hoped you would have closed with us in a happy, and amicable Union, and Composure of all differences amongst us, in the Church of God here, you pretending so Cordially to desire it, and we condiscending to come so near, even (as it were) to your own termes; But oh! that there had been such a heart in you! then had you spared us the paines of this rejoinder to your long Answer, made longer, through that needless, and tedious discourse of yours concerning the civill Sanction of your Presbyterian Government: And though (in the very preface) you say your leisure will not permit you to spend time about Impertinencies; Its wonder to think how quickely you forget your selves: for you no sooner have said it, but straightway fall in hand, to prove this Thesis, *viz.* That your Church Government is established by the Law of this Land, And so stuff your Paper, with the recitall of sundry Orders, and Ordinances of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament, *&c.* Which takes up many Pages throughout your Paper; Which as it was no Question of ours, but started now by you, we shall not here take the paines to reply to, But defer it till anon: Though (we crave leave to tell you) you have hereby started more doubts then you can assoil, and said more, then you have as yet proved, or can make good: But we have not leisure at present to follow you further then our way lies, and therefore come to the matter in hand.

To that mistake you charge us withall in the preface of our Paper, concerning the title of yours, we Answer; we finde

in

in the close of that your Paper these words (*This presentation is approved by this Provincial Assembly*; Tho. Johnson *Moderator*, Edw. Gee *Scribe*) So it is approved by the Provincial Assembly under that title of a presentation as we call it, in all the Copies we have seen: But this (as you say) might be the mistake of your scribe, and not to be insisted on. It is of greater weight and moment (you say) to take notice of what we publish, as our sense and apprehensions of it, *viz.* The matter conteined in your Paper. Not resting in the judgement or determination of any general Council, contrary thereto (if any such should be) much less to one of your Provincial Assemblies, &c. And here you tell us of a publique, and authoritative Judgement, that is in Councils, concerning matters of Doctrine, and discipline (though tied to the rule of Gods Word in such proceedings, as Judges to the Law) to which we ought to be subject; And how far is that? *viz.* They have the power of expounding, and explaining the difficult places of Scripture, as the Judges have of the exposition of the Law) And in this sense we ought to subject to the sense, and determination of a general Council. And therefore (you say) *Questionless if in the time of* S. Augustine, (*who was no contemner of* Synods *and Councils*) *any in this sense had declared, That they would not have submitted their apprehensions to their Judgement, he would have cried out against them, as well as against the Donatists,* O Impudentem Vocem! *And you hope, when we have weighed the matter better, we will not in this sense, see any reason, to refuse to submit either our sense and apprehension of your Paper, or what we may publish as our own private judgements in other matters about Religion to the judgement of a generall Council supposing it might be had.*

God forbid but we should submit; neither need we for this to weigh the matter better, for in this sense we have done, and yet shall submit to any shall come hereafter: Neither had you any reason so to judge your selves, or induce others to that perswasion of us, that we should in this sense refuse to submit our Judgements to the Judgement of any general Council; Our words are plain, *We publish this our sense, and apprehension of it, as far as it is plain to us*, Which words your omitting,

ting, deale not fairely with us, and which words carry another ſenſe with them; For ſo far as the matter conteined in your Paper is plain to us, we cloſe, and joyn with you; Being as we explain our ſelves afterwards ſo fully warranted thereto by the Word of God, and conſtant practiſe of the Catholique Church that therein ſo far as it is made thus plain unto us, we ſhall not ſubmit our Apprehenſions to the Judgement of a general Council: But by this *Apoſiopeſis* of yours, you would mak: the World believe, we refuſe to ſubmit our Judgements to the Judgement of a general Council, not onely touching matters of faith, and ſuch Articles of Religion, which are plainly warranted by Gods Word, and conſtant practice of the Catholique Church: But alſo touching matters, which are not ſo plainly ſet forth in the Word of God: Touching which laſt we profeſs our willing ſubmiſſion to the Judgement of a generall Council, and are glad to hear you of the ſame minde, though we fear (as we ſhall hear you declaring anon) you will hardly grant that to a general Council, which you ſeem to grant to your Provincial. In which we diſſent from you as we have ſaid.

Having done with our preface, you come to the matter, and as we ſaid, ſo we finde we much diſſent not, onely in the third and laſt, concerning the *Hereſie* and *Schiſm* of thoſe who Erre ſo groſſely, whether in Doctrinals, or points of diſcipline: You give us the reaſon wherefore you did not ſo expreſly mention them, their ſin, and puniſhment, as the groſſely ignorant and ſcandalous; Which is, becauſe they are very inconſiderable in compariſon of the other, and in ſundry of your Congregations (if not in moſt) not any at all, that you know of; But if you will ſeriouſly conſider the number of thoſe, that have rent themſelves, from a true conſtituted Church, and of thoſe who have ſevered themſelves, from thoſe Biſhops, unto whom they had ſworn Canonicall obedience, and therefore in the Judgement of that Learned and Reverend Biſhop *Uſher* and others, cannot poſſibly be Excuſed from being Schiſmaticall: we ſay if you conſider this you will finde a conſiderable number, even within the verge of your own Aſſociation.

What

What we ſaid touching the way Catechizing for Information of the ignorant, we are glad to hear you ſo heartily with for a more general practiſe thereof in your Churches at home, as (you ſay) it is practiſed abroad. It was enjoyned, and practiſed in the Church of *England*, before your ſeparation: And if you by your pretended Reformation have deſtroyed that practiſe, the fault lies at your own doors.

You underſtand us aright in this, That we hold it not fitting, that Perſons groſſely ignorant ſhould be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: But your concluſion thence is not good, *viz. That we cannot therefore in reaſon deny, that there ought to be an Examination and tryall of all Perſons* (De novo) *before they be admitted*, &c. Eſpecially by your Elderſhip, *To whom* (you ſay) *the power of judgement and examination is committed, and not to any one Miniſter, before whom all muſt come for re-examination, whatſoever their tryall and examination heretofore hath been:* Thoſe Perſons who have anciently been Catechized, and have been a long time Commoners at the Lords Table and witneſſed a good confeſſion for parts and piety, muſt theſe again yeild themſelves to the examination of an Elderſhip before they can be admitted? Pardon us if herein we pronounce a diſſent from you.

Concerning the ſcandalous, and wicked in their lives, you ſay we fully come up to you, and are glad there is an agreement in judgement betwixt us thus far, (*viz.*) *That the Churches lawfull Paſtors have power to Excommunicate ſuch, upon which* (you ſay) *You cannot ſee how we in reaſon can finde fault with your proceedings, in ſuch away, againſt ſuch Perſons though your ruling Elders* (which in our judgement are but meer lay men) *do joyn in the Government what you:* Ther's another *non Sequitur*, a concluſion as bad as the former, and the reaſon of that concluſion as weak as the reſt. *Becauſe High-Commiſſioners Chancellors, and Commiſſaries, in the time of Epiſcopacy* (to which Government we ſubmitted) *That were as much lay men, as your ruling Elder, had ſo great a ſhare as to ſuſpend Miniſters*, &c. *and ſo far as to decree the ſentence of Excommunication againſt them, and others, as there was occaſion for it*: For when you can prove that theſe Chancellars, Commiſſaries, &c. did

not officiate by deputation from, and under a lawfull Paſtor, but in equall right with him, and *jure divino*, as your ruling Elders do, Then your Compariſon of them, and your ruling Elders may hold good, till then it is weak, and frivolous.

Now whereas you deſire to know, whom we mean by lawfull Paſtors, our Anſwer is, we mean ſuch Perſons as have received their Ordination from men lawfully, and truely qualified with a juſt power of conferring Orders; which you (and we believe tis none but you) preſume one Presbyter may give another: Whereupon you inſtance the opinion of D^r *Uſher*, in a late Letter of his, ſet forth by Dr *Bernard*, and refer us to Dr *Bernards* animadverſions upon it. We have peruſed the Papers to which you refer us, and finde that D^r *Uſher* doth not invalidate the Ordination by Presbyters, but with a ſpeciall reſtriction, to ſuch places where Biſhops cannot be had: But this we muſt deſire you to conſider is, *Ex neceſſitate, non ex perjurio & pertinaciâ*, which he in the next page clearely delucidates, this words are theſe, *You may eaſily judge that the Ordination made by ſuch Presbyters, as have ſevered themſelves from thoſe Biſhops, unto whom they had ſworn Canonical obedience, cannot poſſibly by me be excuſed from being Schiſmatical. Examine your ſelves in this particular, we ſhall not judge any man.*

For this Parity amongſt Church Officers (an Errour firſt broacht by *Arius*, and for which amongſt other things, he was moſt juſtly condemned of *Hereſie*) and Ordination by Presbyters, otherwiſe then before expreſſed, cannot poſſibly be made out by any inſtance out of D^r *Uſhers* Letter or Dr *Bernards* animadverſions upon it, ſince he is clearly againſt it; and ſo that Catalogue of Divines, Schoolemen, and Fathers by you out of him collected, is fruſtraneouſly cited.

Concerning ſubmiſſion to the judgement of Councils rightly called and conſtituted, we have ſaid enough before. In which point, if you will hold to what you profeſs, you ſhall not have us diſſenting from you: But we ſhall finde you of another minde, before you come to a concluſion.

As for your Provinciall Aſſembly at *Preſton*, or any other elſwhere of that nature, we ſay it is a new Termed Aſſembly; Not for the words ſake (Aſſembly) but new both in reſpect

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of the word (Provinciall) and place (at *Preſton*) That County of *Lancaſter* ſhould be termed the Province of *Lancaſter*, and the *Synods* and Aſſemblies therein convened (at *Preſton* or elſwhere) ſhould be termed Provinciall, all new: New alſo in reſpect of the Perſons conſtituting this Aſſembl, Lay-men to perſide, to rule, and to have decisive voices, in as ample manner as the higheſt, and cheifeſt in holy Orders, is a novelty, no Antiquity can plead for it: Nor doth Dr *Bernard*, or Biſhop *Uſher*, that Learned, and reverend Antiquary, or the Fathers, and Councils there alleadged, and by you, out of him ſo confidently cited, any way make for ſuch an Aſſembly. And ſo your Provincial Aſſembly at *Preſton* may in the Judgement of Biſhop *Uſher*, be accounted, a new termed Provincial Aſſembly, and remains as yet uncleared from all ſuſpition of novelty.

Well! but (you ſay) *we go on and tell you*, &c. But had your profeſſions and Expreſſions for Peace, and Unity, been as reall, and as cordiall as ours; We had proceeded no further in this way of rejoynder, but cloſed hands, and hearts together, as in our laſt humble addreſs appeareth. Which certainly might have found a more ready compliance, and merited a far more civill and ſatisfactory Anſwer from ſuch cordiall Wiſhers of Peace and Unity, ſuch godly and ſober, ſuch moderate ſpirited men as you pretend to be.

But you have required we ſhould go on, and accordingly we go on to tell you that other parts of your Paper are full of darkeneſs: To which you thus Anſwer, *We cannot apprehend any ſuch darkeneſs in our Paper as you ſpeak of; But becauſe you Queſtion what Authority we have from the civill Magiſtrate and the extent of it, and your miſtakes of our meaning, may perhaps ſome of them ariſe from your unacquaintedneſs with the rule we walk by; Although we were not to be blamed for any miſtakes that might ariſe* ab ignorantia juris (*whether ſimple or affected that we determine not but leave you to judge*) *Before we come to make Anſwer more particularly to what follows, we are willing to be at ſome pains, to give you ſome further account of the power, we are awarranted by the civill Authority for to exerciſe, To what Perſons within our bounds it extends it ſelf*, &c.

pains you have taken, and that willingly, and ſpent much time, and Paper too, which hath ſwelled your Anſwer to ſo great a bulk, to prove that which was not oppugned, nor ſo much as queſtioned by us, ſo Impertinent to the buſineſs of our Paper: Though you have ſaid you are not willing to ſpend time abouts Impertinencies: By which (however we go on yet) you wheel about and are come to the Pole you firſt ſtarted at, like a Horſe in a mill that travels all day, and is no further at night, then he was in the morning. You went about to prove, your Government eſtabliſhed by civill Authority, the firſt work you took in the hand, you are no further yet, but going about to prove, out of your way quite; But ſince you compell us to follow you a mile, we will walk with you twain, till we have conducted you (if poſſible) into the good old way again, by taking of your Government from that eſtabliſhment of Authority, upon the prove whereof, the moſt conſiderable part (as to the bulk) of your Anſwer doth inſiſt. To prove your Presbyterian Government to be eſtabliſhed by Law, and to be warranted by the civill Authority, you produce ſeverall Orders, and Ordinances, but one more eſpecially you inſtance *of the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament bearing date the* 19. Auguſt. 1648. *Which* you ſay *is without any limitation of time, and remains unrepealed to this day, nay more by the humble Advice aſſented unto by his Highneſs it receives ſtrength.*

To which we Anſwer, when you ſpeak of a Government eſtabliſht by Law, we hope you mean, ſuch, as hath the force, and ſtrength of a Law, to bind the free born People of this Nation otherwayes you ſay nothing, If ſuch a Law you mean; Then we much Queſtion, whether your Ordinance of Lords and Commons, though unrepealed to this day be of that force; And ſeeing we be no Lawiers, we ſhall not take upon us the determination of that point. But refer you in that particular, to the Judgement, and reſolution of the Sages of the Law, who affirm, that nothing can have the force of a Law to binde the people, without the concurrent conſent of the three Eſtates in Parliament: My Lord *Cooke* is moſt full throughout his works, publiſhed by the ſpeciall appointment of that long Parliament:

Parliament: Hear you him, *For the Parliament concerning making, and enacting of Laws, consists of the King, the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons, and it is no Act unless it be made by the King, the Lords and Commons.* 2 *part Institut.* fol. 157. 158.

Again, *if an Act be made by the King and Commons, this binds not, for it is no Act of Parliament. Ibid.*

Again, *It is no Act of Parliament, but an Ordinance, and therefore binds not.* 4. *part Instit. fol.* 23.

Again, *Nothing can pass as a Law, without the Kings royal assent, and authority to bind the people,* 3. *part Instit. fol.* 9.

See him also again in his *Institu.* 4 *part fol.* 232. where he cites several Charters and Ordinances made in the behalf of the Court of *Stanneries*, and in the end saith, *These things were done de facto, but let us turn our selves to that which hath the force of a Law.*

And in the same 4. *part cap.* 73. of the Courts of Forrests, *fol.* 298. see there a prescription good against a Statute of 1 *Ed.* 3. *cap.* 2. because it was made but in affirmance of the common Law of the Forrest, and against such a Statute a man may prescribe: And good also against the Ordinance of 34. *E.* 1. and the onely Reason given, is, because it was but an Ordinance and no Statute.

An Ordinance of both Houses is no Law of the Land by their own confession (meaning the Parliament) saith Judge *Jenkins.* 1 *part Coll. Ordinances fol,* 728.

This was the onely Law stood in force and binding, which was made by the concurrent consent of all in the judgement of these Sages, & was called the Law of the Land: None else in old time was judged valid, or to have the force & strength of a law: Nor at this day will any ordinance of one or both Houses be judged valid without his Highness assent thereunto, as we humbly conceive.

But admitting Ordinances of one, or both Houses of Parliament, without the Kings of old or his Highness assent of late, to have as great a force and strength in them, and to be as valid to all intents and purposes, as if their assents were given thereto; Yet this we affirm of your Ordinance, settling Presbyterian Government throughout the Kingdom of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*, That it is made of little or no force at this day

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in reſpect of thoſe ſeveral ſubſequent Acts granting liberty to all pious and conſcientious Chriſtians throughout this Land, to ſerve God in their own way of worſhip and diſcipline, notwithſtanding any Law or Ordinance to the contrary, which though they amount not to an expreſs, yet at leaſt to an implicite Repeal of your Ordinance, ſo far as it is contrary to this Liberty; for *Leges poſteriores priores contrarias abrogant.*

But ſtand you upon an expreſs Repeal? Then be pleaſed to peruſe an Act made Anno 1650. *for Relief of Religious and peaceable people from the rigour of former Acts of Parliament in matters of Religion.* And to peruſe a little better the humble Advice by you in your Anſwer alledged, and you will find it far otherwiſe than you ſay.

In the eleventh Section, All Miniſters throughout the Land, and their Aſſemblies profeſſing the true Proteſtant Chriſtian Religion, though of different judgement in Worſhip or Diſcipline, are all of them equally protected in the liberty of their profeſſion: Have you liberty to exerciſe your Church Government amongſt your ſelves? They as much. Have you protection? Others as much. What power have you that others have not? Are theſe within the bounds of your Aſſociation, and ſubject to your Government, unleſs they will renounce their Baptiſme, and Chriſtianity? Nay, they have their way of Worſhip, and Protection in that way granted them as well as you: And as they may not revile or reproach, nor diſturbe you in your Aſſemblies, no more may you them in their Aſſemblies, nor compell any by cenſures or penalties to ſubmit to your Government. Is there a Presbyterian Government ſo ſettled by Ordinance, as to compell any contrary to this Liberty? Read the Act of 1650 aboveſaid, and you ſhall find an expreſs Repeal: Read alſo the cloſe of this Section, and you'l find an expreſs Repeal of it there alſo in theſe words, *All Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, and Clauſes in any Law Statute, and Ordinance, ſo far as they are contrary to the aforeſaid Liberty be repealed.* Doth not this take from you what you may conceive was granted by former Ordinances? Doth your Presbyterian Government (for all your Gloſſes upon it) receive ſtrength from hence? Doth the Ordinance of the Lords and Commons aſſembled in Parliament

Parliament for ſettling Presbyterian Government throughout the Land, remain yet unrepealed, for any thing you have ſeen or heard to the contrary? Yea, ſo you affirm, and would have us credit you.

And thus having proved your Presbyterian Government to have the civil Sanction (juſt thus and no otherwiſe) you come now to anſwer more particularly to that which follows; And firſt you explicate (what was before dark unto us) who are meant, *by the many perſons of all ſorts, that are Members of Congregations, &c. And you tell us all perſons are within your verge, none without except they will renounce Chriſtianity and their Baptiſme, but are within the verge of your Presbyterian Government, their not aſſociating with you in regard of Government, doth not exempt them from cenſure by it, &c. Independents, Anabaptiſts, and others, all are ſubject, and cenſured by your Government, if they ſhould be ſuch Offenders as by the Rule thereof are juſtly cenſurable, it being not a matter arbitrary for private perſons at their own will and pleaſure to exempt themſelves from under that Eccleſiaſtical Government that is ſettled by authority.*

Here Gentlemen you may do well to conſider whether you do not ſubject your ſelves to the contempt and ſcorn of all other parties who conceit they have as full power by their Rules of Church Diſcipline, to cenſure you, as you have them (*Jam ſumus ergo pares*) yet they dare not cenſure or puniſh any out of their Church Membership, contrary to the ſeveral Acts made for Toleration: To the Act of the 27. *September* 1650. and to the expreſs Article in the Humble advice above mentioned. If you be ſo bold, we have told you before, and tell you again, an Ordinance of Lords and Commons for ſettling of your Presbyterian Government, will be no ſufficient plea, for your Actings, contrary to the known Laws ſince made, but will prove you Contemners of civil power, and may run you upon a *premunire*.

But here you ſeem offended at us for calling *Presbytery a common-fold. What? Presbytery a known Scripture expreſſion,* 1 Tim. 4. *and interpreted by ſundry of the Fathers as we do* (*as hath been before declared*) *to be tearmed a common-fold? You might have uſed a more civil expreſſion.* Object.

What?

What? Presbytery interpreted by ſundry of the Fathers as you do? How is that? We ſhall tell you the Fathers are different in the ſenſe, and interpretation of this word *Presbytery*, in the Scripture expreſſion, 1 *Tim.* 4. The Latine Fathers generally, as *Hierome*, *Ambroſe*, *Primaſius*, *Anſelm*, and others, taking this word *Presbytery*, for the Function, which *Timothy* received when he was made Biſhop or Prieſt; and thus *Calvin* takes it in his Inſtitutes. *Quod de impoſitione manuum Presbyterii dicitur, non ità accipio quaſi Paulus de Seniorum collegio loquatur, ſedhoc nomine ordinationem ipſam intelligo.* The Greek Fathers, as *Ignatius*, *Chryſoſtome*, *Theodoret*, *Theophilact*, *Oecumenius*, and others, and ſome few of the Latines alſo taking it for the company of Presbyters (*i. e*) Biſhops who lay hand on the new made Biſhops or Prieſts, and in this ſenſe likewiſe in his Comment upon this place it is interpreted by *Calvin*, ſaying, *Presbyterium, qui hic collectivum nomen eſſe putant, pro Collegio Presbyterorum poſitum, rectè ſentiunt meo judicio.* Although he is here as flat oppoſite to his former Judgement, as high noon, is to midnight: And we fear we ſhall find you, as wavering and unſettled in yours, when it comes to ſcanning: For divers of the Fathers (you ſay) interpret this word as you do, and as you have before declared. Now how you interpret it, and where to find this place, where it is before declared, That your Interpretation agreeth with ſundry of the Fathers we have not yet diſcovered.

b. 4. cap. 3. & 16. in fine.

Indeed we find you quoting Dr. *Uſher* that Learned and Reverend Antiquary, to prove the antiquity of Synods and Aſſemblies, and thereby you think he vindicates your Aſſemblies, in our thoughts, from all ſuſpition of Novelty. We find alſo by you, out of him there quoted certain Fathers, as firſt, *Ignatius*, who by Presbytery, mentioned by *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. did underſtand the Community of the reſt of the Presbyters or Elders; And for further proof *Tertullian* is alleged in his general Apologie for Chriſtians, that old-beaten ſaying by you and your party, *præſident probati quique Seniores*, &c. Now do theſe interpret as you do? Is *Presbytery* ſuch as you pretend to be eſtabliſhed by Ordinance of Parliament, and ſuch as you ſtand for in your ſenſe, is it we ſay ſo underſtood by Dr. *Uſher*, and doth he

he bring in theſe Fathers ſpeaking in this ſenſe? If we preſs you to ſtand to their opinion and ſenſe, you will run back; how may you then for ſhame aſſert that their Interpretation is the ſame with yours, D^r *Uſhers* Judgement of Aſſemblies agreeth with yours? and his propoſals of Aſſemblies are the ſame in ſubſtance with yours, Whom you quote (you ſay) as more likely to ſway with us, in caſe we do differ from you in this point. And here theſe Fathers are brought in, giving the ſame Interpretation as you do, will you thus confidently aſſert this, and ſtand to nothing, have you two hearts, and not one forehead? In our laſt Adreſs, we offered to ſtand to D^r *Uſhers* Judgement, and you declined your own man: We ſubmit to the Interpretation of thoſe Farhers there alleadged by him touching the word Presbytery, which you ſay is the ſame with yours. Can you ſo cordially joyn your ſelves in Dr *Bernards* wiſh, and heartily recommend it to others to cloſe therein? Can you thus tender the Judgement of D^r *Uſher* as an Umpire, and compoſer of differences betwixt us, and alleadge theſe Fathers on your behalf, and when we would cloſe with you, upon your own Tearms run back and eat your own words?

Presbytery in their's, and Scripture Expreſſion we reverence; but yours we ſtill tearm a Common fold, and thoſe godly pretences of yours as ſo many waſt Papers, wherein your Presbytery is wrapped, to make it look more handſomely and paſs more currently: Whereas you are again no litle offended and ſay, *We do earneſtly, deſire that in the Examination of your conſciences, you would ſeriouſly conſider whether you have not both tranſgreſſed the rules of Charity in paſſing ſuch hard cenſures upon us, and alſo uſurped that which belongs not to you, in making your ſelves judges of what fals not under your cognizance*: To which we Anſwer; thoſe words are not our own, they are borrowed of another, if you would know the Author, we muſt tell you, it was the late King in his εἰκὼν βασιλικὴ, who is gone before, and you muſt follow after: And we leave it to the Tribunal at the great day to be determined, whether he or you, have more tranſgreſſed the rules of Charity, in paſſing ſuch hard cenſures upon one another, and alſo uſurped that which belongs not to you, in making your ſelves judges of what fals not under your Cog-

nizance, The things (as you say) mentioned, belonging onely to be tried by your and our Master, to whom we must all stand or fall.

And now we come (you say) to frame an objection out of your Paper, and return our Answer, professing that we pray for the establishment of such a Church Government throughout his Highness Dominions as is consonant to the will of God, and Universal practise of primitive Churches: By which two (*viz.*) the will of God, and Universal practise of Churches, we seem to make up the rule (as you say) for deciding of Controversies of this Nature or of any other in matters of Religion: In which you profess to differ greatly from us, as not sound and orthodox; For the Word of God is the onely rule to judge of matters of this Nature, or of any other matters of Religion, and therefore away with the constant and Universall practise of the Church: We might have cut the matter a great deal shorter and said, That we are for the establishment of that Government that is most consonant to the will of God, revealed in Scriptures, and that the Word of God alone should determine this controversie, *&c.*

Who can forbear laughter to see Scripturists under the Gospel (as these under the Law, *Templum Domini, Templum Domini*) crie *Verbum Domini, Verbum Domini*, nothing but Scripture, the Word of God being there the onely rule of faith and manners? Take to your Bibles then, and burn all other Books, as the Anabaptists of old did, who when they and their Bibles were left together, what strange Phantastical opinion soever came into their brain, their usual manner was to say, The spirit taught it them: as Mr *Hooker* in his preface to his *Eccles. pol.*

The determination of Councils, and Fathers, and the Churches Universal practise for matter of Church Government, must all be abandoned, and then to that old Question of the Papists, Where was your Church before *Luther*? or that of ours to you, Where was your Church before *Calvin*? (Just like the Arguing of the Samaritanes with the *Jewes*, about the Antiquity of their Church on *Mount Gerazim* recorded by *Josephus*) *per Saltum*, by a high Jump over all the Universall practise and successions of the Church, you can make your Church and

Church

Church Government as ancient as you list, by saying it is to be found in the Scriptures, referring it to Christ, and his Apostles; nay higher yet if you please, to the Jewish *Sanhedrim* 1500. years at least before Christ. Mr *Hinderson* will assist you much in this, who in his dispute with his Majesty, averring that Presbyterian Government was never practised before *Calvins* time, replyeth; *Your Majesty knows the Common objection of the Papists against the Reformed Churches, Where was your Church, your Reformation your Doctrine before* Luthers *time?* One part of the Common Answer as it is to found in the Scriptures, the same I affirm of Presbyterian Government: Thus he.

Make you such defence in behalf of your Church; but (thanks be to God) the Protestant cause hath not, doth not, nor (we hope) will ever want, far abler Disputants and Champions, in her defence against her adversaries, then he or you be: For though we grant, and shall ever pray that reverence to the sacred Scriptures, that it is an unfallible unerring rule, yet may we not crie up Scripture to the contempt and neglect of the Church, which the Scripture it self teacheth men both to honour and obey. We will indeavour therefore to give either their due according to Christs institution, that the Scripture, where it is plain, should guide the Church, and the Church, where there's doubt or difficulty, should expound the Scriptures as saith a Bishop: And you your selves may remember what you affirm of General Councils (The Churches Representative) nay more of your Provincial Assembies, even in your Answer to that you call the preface to our Paper, *That there is in them invested an Authoritative juridicall power* (To whose Authority you profess your selves to be subject, and to which all ought to submit, alleagding 1 *Corinthians* 14. 32. *Mat.* 18. and *Acts* 15. for proof hereof) *to Inquire into, trie, Examine, Censure, and judge of Matters of Doctrine, as well as of discipline*; And taxe us, as if we refused to submit in such matters, to the Judgement of a General Council: Though here you retract and eat your own words, casting it out as unsound and Hetrodox, what was before a Christians duty to practise: You still own subjection in matters of Doctrine, and discipline, to the Judgement and determination of your Provincial Assemblies,

Στύλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Cant. 1. 8.

Bishop Lauds *preface against* Usher.

though you deny the Authority of Generall Councils, and the Catholique Church; That those should be our guide, and rule, and comment upon the Word of God, to tell us, what is his will revealed there, touching Church Government, and discipline: Said we not, truely that you seem to submit to your Provincial; what you will hardly grant to a general Council?

But the Church (as we have said) where there's doubt or difficulty, may expound the Scripture, though it be tied (as you have said) to the rule of Gods Words in such proceedings, as Judges to the Law, and we are concluded, and bound up by that, as we are to those cases in the Law, which are the Judgment and exposition of the Judges, upon the dark places of the same; The Churches exposition and practise is our rule in such cases, and the best rule too: As our late King affirmeth, (*viz.*) *Where the Scripture is not so clear, and punctuall in precepts, there the constant and Universal practise of the Church, in things not contrary to reason, faith, good manners, or any positive command, is the best rule that Christians can follow.* So when there is a difference about Interpretation of Scripture (That we may not seem to abound in our own sense, or give way to private interpretation, *Dominari fidei*, to Lord it over the faith of other) we are not to utter our own phansies, or desires to be believed upon our bare word, but to deliver that sense which hath been aforetime given by our fore-Fathers, and forerunners in the Christian faith: And so we necessarily make another judge and rule for interpretation of Scripture, or else we prove nothing.

Eikon Basilikē. Chap. 20.

Thus have the best and ablest defenders of our Protestant Religion defended it against the Papists (out of the Word of God too, but not according to their own but the sense which the Fathers unanimously in the primitive Church, and Councils gave.

See Mr *Philpot*, that glorious Martyr in Queen *Maries* dayes to the like Question propounded, *viz.* *How long hath your Church stood?* Answereth; *from the beginning, from Christ, from the Apostles, and their Immediats Successors*; And for proof thereof desires no better rule, then what the Papists many times bring in on their side; to wit, Antiquity Universality, and Unity. And *Calvin* acknowledgeth (as in our last Paper we shewed

ſhewed you) there can be no better, nor ſurer, remedy for Interpretation of Scripture, then what the Fathers in the primitive Churches gave, eſpecially in the firſt four general Councills of *Nice*, *Conſtantinople*, *Epheſus* and *Chalcedon*, which contain nothing (ſaith he) but the pure and genuine Interpretation of Scripture, and which he profeſſeth to embrace, and reverence, as hallowed, and inviolable; So they reſt not in private interpretation, but willingly ſubmit to a judge and rule beſids the Scriptures, even ſuch as the Papiſts themſelves cannot except againſt; (*viz.*) the primitive Churches practiſe, and Univerſal and unanious conſent of Fathers, and general Councils. By theſe our Church is content to be tryed, and to this rule we bring the Church Government to be tried thereby.

And on this ſcore your Presbytery is quite out of doors, being of examples and practiſe of the Church, and Teſtimonies of the Fathers wholly deſtitute, wherein (as the King hath it) the whole ſtream runs ſo for Epiſcopacy, that ther's not the leaſt rivulet for any others: Which you being ſenſible of, have no way to evade this rule, but, *unâ liturâ*, to blot out all records, and monuments of Antiquity, for the ſpace of 300. years after Chriſt as imperfect, and far from ſhewing the Univerſal practiſe of the Church then, and to brand the moſt approved Authors of thoſe times as ſpurious and corrupt, voide of all modeſty, and ſhewing thereby no great ſtore either of Judgement or honſty. Εἰκὼν Βασ λικὴ. Chap. 17.

But ſuppoſing the Monuments and Records of Antiquity for the ſpace of 300. years after Chriſt were now (as you ſay) grown unperfect, and not able to ſhew what was then the Churches practiſe; yet come we to the general Councils (which are the beſt Expoſitors of Scripture, and of the Churches practiſe) and we by them ſhall finde the practiſe of the Church in former time: That famous Council of *Nice*, which muſt be, and is of all wiſe and Learned men, reverenced, eſteemed, and imbraced next unto the Scriptures themſelves, ſhews you the practiſe of the Church in its form of Church Government, by Patriarch, Metropolitan, Arch-Biſhop, Biſhop, *&c.* as by the 6th, 7th 13th, 25th 26th, and 27th Canons of the ſame Council appeareth: Not that this Council did conſtitute, and create, as ſome

ſome falſly conceit, but did onely confirm and ſtrengthen thoſe orders and degrees which were in the Church even from the beginning, ſo are the words of the Councill *Can.* 6. The very firſt words of that Canon (whereby it is ordained, that the whole power of all *Ægypt*, *Lybia*, and *Pentapolis*, ſhould belong to the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, even as it is alſo there decreed, that the ancient cuſtomes and Priviledges which belonged to the Biſhop of *Rome*, *Antioch*, and the Metropolitanes of other Provinces ſhould be preſerved) are Ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατείτω, The very words which *Ignatius* uſeth to expreſs the Apoſtolical Traditions, *Antiqui mores obtineant in Ægypto, Lybiâ & Pentapoli, &c. i. e.* Let the ancient cuſtomes in *Ægypt*, *Lybia*, and *Pentapolis* continue, that the Patriarcks of *Alexandria* ſhould have power over all theſe: even thoſe Cuſtomes which were deduced down to thoſe times, from St. *Mark* the Evangeliſt, not only Byſhop of *Alexandria*, but of the Churches of *Ægypt*, *Lybia*, and *Pentapolis* alſo. So *Euſebius*, *lib* 2. *cap.* 15. 16. and others.

So that theſe Canons here made gave no new thing, did not *de novo*, inſtitute or eſtabliſh this ſtanding ſubordination in the Church (*viz.*) of all inferiour Officers in the Church, to the Biſhop in every Dioceſs; of the Biſhop in every Province, to the Metropolitan; of the Metropolitane in every Region, to the Patriarch or Primate; but did onely confirm it. Theſe ſtanding powers, and ſubjection, being defined and aſſerted by the ancient Canons, yea the moſt Ancient even immemorial Apoſtolicall Tradition and Cuſtome, avouched for it as may appear, *Concil Nicen.* 1. *cap.* 4. 6. *Concil Anto.* cap. 1. 20. *Concil Chalced*, cap. 119. See more of this in Dr. *Hammond* of Schiſm, *Cap.* 3. ſect. 22. 23, 24, 25. *cap.* 8. ſect. 8.

Thus much to ſhew the practice of the Church, in point of Church Government for the firſt 300 years, even from generall Councils, the beſt Expoſitors of the practice of the Church in thoſe times. And as they are our beſt Informers of the Churches practiſe, ſo are they the beſt Interpreters of the mind and will of God in Scripture touching Church-Government; *Calvin* reckoning up the ſeverall orders and degrees of Biſhops, Arch-biſhops, Metripolitane and Patriarch, and rendring the rea-

reaſon of ſuch Governours ordained by the ſaid Council of *Nice*, though he diſlike the name Hierarchie, which ſome gave unto that Government; yet (ſaith he) omitting the name, if we look into the thing, we ſhall find that theſe ancient Biſhops did not frame a form of Church-Government, differing from that which Chriſt hath preſcribed in his word. Mark, we pray; the Churches practice, in the form of Church-Government, was hitherto according to the preſcript of Gods word, in *Calvins* Judgement. And this was 330 years after Chriſt: Yea, *Beza* likewiſe, that earneſt Patron of Presbyterian diſcipline, confeſſeth, That thoſe things which were ordained of the ancient Fathers, concerning the ſeats of Biſhops, Metropolitanes, and Patriarchs, aſſigning their limits, and attributing to them certain Authority, were appointed *optimo zelo*, out of a very good zeal; and therefore ſuch ſure as was according to knowledge, and the word of God, otherwiſe it would be far from being *optimus*, the beſt zeal: And thus we have found a Church-Government agreeable to the will of God, and univerſall practiſe of primitive Churches: ſuch a one as we pray for, may be eſtabliſhed in this Nation, putting both together, not the word of God alone, nor the Churches practice alone, but both together, and both in their due places; not crying up the Church above the Scripture, nor crying up the Scripture to the contempt and neglect of the Church: but referring the practice and cuſtomes of the Church into that credit is due unto them; by invalidating of which, all heretical and ſchiſmatical perſons ſeek to over-throw the Church. Nay, but yours is that Government which is moſt conformant to the will of God revealed in Scriptures, and your ruling Elders are *jure divino*, which you cannot part with, unleſs you ſhould betray the truth of Chriſt, *Rom.* 12. 1 *Cor.* 12. 1 *Tim.* 5. We anſwer, theſe Texts are too general to prove a ruling Presbyterie out of; and ſo you have been often told by many more learned Doctors of our Engliſh Church. Yet ruling Elders muſt be found here, for ſo you will have it, let *Gideons* fleece be wet or dry; That is, whether there be dew enough in thoſe Texts to water the ſenſe or no: Therefore being reſolved on it, you wreſt the Scriptures (which St. *Peter* complains of) with Expoſitions, and gloſſes newly

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coined, to make them ſpeak what they never meant, giving ſuch new and ſtrange ſenſes to places of Scripture, as the Church of Chriſt never heard of till of late years: This wreſting of Scripture, Dr. *Andrews* taxeth the Papiſts withall, ſaying, *Malus hic Cardinalium mos*; and we as truly, *Malus hic Presbyterorum mos—rem facias, rem—ſi poſſis rectè, ſi non, quocunq; modo rem*, &c. ſuch a ſenſe you give of theſe places, which one of the Fathers gave, or heard of; and being a ſtanger to them, we can but term it an Imagination of yours, and ſo leave it and you to what we have in our laſt Paper further ſpoken of it. Touching which, no reply hath been as yet ſent us from you.

But now as to you, and what followes, ſay you, and ſo go on maintaining your power of examination, and the extent of it, being as you pretend, backt by the Authoritie of the civil Magiſtrate, which Authoritie is taken of by ſeverall ſubſequent Acts of Parliament, and ſo your Church-Government, and Church-cenſures are of no force upon any, but ſuch as are willingly (and no longer then they are willingly) ſubject thereto, as we have ſhewed before.

The Civil Sword doth and can reach others, your Eccleſiaſtical cannot: The Act inflicts a civill puniſhment, whether corporall or pecuniarie, upon all lawleſs perſons, whether ſuch as contemn Gods Law or Mans, and not a ſpirituall, and therefore not cenſurable by you. And this is a miſtake of yours to think, that notwithſtanding the puniſhment inflicted upon the offender by the civill Magiſtate, you may for the ſame offence proceed to execute Church-cenſures alſo, ſo a man may come to be puninſhed twice for one offence, which is againſt the Law; and therefore in ſuch Statutes (as in 1 *Mar. cap.* 2. and 1 *Eliz. cap.* 12.) where there is a puniſhment preſcribed to be inflicted by the Civil Magiſtrate upon the tranſgreſſors of that Act, and alſo another to be inflicted by the Church; yet there is a ſpeciall Proviſo immediately follows, That whatſoever perſon offending the premiſes, ſhall for any the offences afore-recited, receive puniſhment of the ordinarie, having teſtimoniall thereof under the ſaid ordinaries Seal, ſhall not for the ſame offence eftſoon be convicted before the Juſtice, nor in likewiſe receiving for the ſaid offence, puniſhment, by the Juſtice, he ſhall

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not receive for the ſaid offence punishment of the ordinarie.

Now theſe latter Acts and Ordinances, againſt drunkenneſſe, ſwearing, prophanation of the Sabbath, &c. enjoyning puniſhment by the Civill Magiſtrate onely, hath utterly taken of all power of excommunication: And therefore our advice to you, to complain to the Civill Magiſtrate of ſuch lawleſſe perſons was not amiſs, becauſe that Sword is ſharper and longer then any you have, or can pretend to.

And you further proceed to make anſwer to our ſeverall enſuing Quæries, but how fully and ſatisfactorily all may judge, that have peruſed what hath formerly been ſaid touching the civil ſanction of your Government: Our firſt Quærie is, *Why Government in ſingulari?* Your anſwer is, *Becauſe it is the onely Government that is eſtabliſhed in this Church by Civill Authority.* This Anſwer hath been confuted before, we ſhall ſay no more here to that. But we are unſatisfied, what you mean by (this Church) whether you mean this Church at *Mancheſter*, where your Claſſis is, or you mean the Church of *England*: If you mean this Church of *Mancheſter* of your aſſociation, it is eſtabliſht not ſo much by Ordinance of Lords and Commons in Parliament, as by later Acts, granting the free exerciſe of Religion in Doctrine and Worſhip to all Churches and Congregations in their own way, to all, and all alike, but ſuch as are particularly cautioned againſt. And ſo you in your Presbytery in your Church at *Mancheſter* are protected, becauſe you have poſſeſſed your ſelves of that Church: But then others in other Churches and Congregations, to wit, *Preſtwich*, *Burie*, *Middleton*, and the like, may ſay of their way of worſhip, it is the onely Government which is eſtabliſht in this Church. But if your meaning be of the Church of *England*, (and ſo we conceive by the ſubſequent words, *viz.* That there is no other Government but yours owned as the Church-Government throughout the whole Nation). You are certainly miſtaken, and dare not maintain it, that his Highneſs, or his Council owns Presbytery, and none but that Government.

But leaving the Civill Sanction, you come to the divine right of Presbytery, and prove it to be the onely Government in *ſingulari*, becauſe it is that onely Government which Chriſt hath

preſcribed in his word; and what Chriſt hath thus preſcribed, muſt needs be *de jure*, one and the ſame in every Church. And *Calvins* judgement (you ſay) in this particular is ſo manifeſt by his works, to the whole world, that it needs no proof. We have told you before of the form and order of Church-Government appointed by the Council of *Nice*, by Patriarch, Arch-Biſhop, Biſhop, &c. How this Government (which we ſuppoſe you will not ſay is *Presbyterian*) is in *Calvins* judgement, not differing from that which Chriſt hath preſcribed in his word; And in his firſt Section of this Chapter, he tells us of Biſhops, (not one word of Elders, choſen out of the people who ſhould rule in the Church) but Biſhops that did all, *viz.* make and publiſh Canons (a note certainly of rule and jurisdiction in the Church) in which (ſaith he) they ſo ordered all things after the rule of Gods word, that a man may ſee they had in a manner nothing differing from the word of God. And this form of Government did repreſent a certain Image of divine Inſtitution. Can *Calvin* ſay more for your *Presbytery*? nay, can he ſay ſo much? then how manifeſt is his judgement for the *jus divinum* of your *Presbytery*; that it is that Government in particular, which Chriſt hath preſcribed in his word?

Thus have we taken of your *Calvin* and *Beza* (as above) your modern Doctors, for Fathers you have none, and now you deſcend to the Aſſembly of Divines. The *jus divinum*, by *London* Miniſters, the provincial Synod at *London*, *Rutterford*, *Gyllaſpie*, to prove your divine right of *Presbytery*, modern Authors of yeſterday, with whom you paint your Margent in abundance, and may ſerve your turn amongſt the ignorant and vulgar ſort; who meaſure all by tale, and not by weight, when others that know what, and who many of them are, will conclude you draw very near the dregs.

As for ſuch as are lawleſs perſons, and who thoſe be, whether drunkards, ſwearers, unclean perſons, prophaners of the Sabbath, ſuch as will not ſubject themſelves to the preſent Government, &c. altogether or a part, *conjunctim ſeu diviſim*, whether you will, they are onely puniſhable by the Civil Magiſtrate, you cannot exclude them the Church by any of your cenſures, as we have ſaid before.

To our next Quære (*viz.*) How far you extend this Saintſhip, this Church and Aſſembly of Saints? You anſwer, *As farre as the Apoſtle did, when writing to the Church of* Corinth *and* Galatia, *he calls them Saints, and Churches, notwithſtanding the groſs errors of many members in them; and therefore though there may be ſundry of the like ſtamp in your Aſſemblies, you do not un-church them, or make your Aſſemblies not Aſſemblies of Saints, becauſe of the corruption of ſuch Members, &c.* But, by your leave, you anſwer not our queſtion, which was not, Whether all your Aſſemblies were called aſſemblies of Saints? for no queſtion, you will not unchurch your ſelves, or un-ſaint your Aſſemblies, notwithſtanding the corruptions in them. But whether none elſe but you were accounted Saints, none Brethren and Siſters in Chriſt, but ſuch as ſtand for your pretended diſcipline? If ſo, then the Donatiſts crime may be imputed to you; and we ſay with St. *Auguſtine, O Impudentem Vocem!* Nay, but this cannot be laid in your diſh, *whoſe principles and practiſes are ſo manifeſtly againſt the practiſes and opinions of the Donatiſts of old, it may more fitly be charged upon ſuch as have rent themſelves from your Churches.* But who are they that have rent from your Church? we hear but of few that ever admitted themſelves members, or profeſſed themſelves of your aſſociation, that ever rent from it. Thoſe that are out, ſay, they were never of you, never had ſworn obedience to, or ſubſcribed any Articles of yours, as you or many of you had ſworn Canonicall obedience to the Government by Biſhops, and ſubſcribed the 39 Articles of the Church of *England*: Here is a rent indeed, a Schiſm in the higheſt, which is not ſatisfied, but with the utter over-throw of that Church, from whom they rent and raſing out thoſe Articles of Religion, they had formerly confirmed by their own ſubſcription, ſaying, *Illa non eſt, &c. O Impudentem Vocem!* this ſaying doth not concern you.

But ſtill we are unſatisfied in the word (Publique) what you mean thereby, to which you Anſwer, *Such as you by your profeſſion and practiſe do own for publique, ſuch as you do conſtantly frequent, and ſtir up others to frequent alſo where are alſo the publique Ordinances of the Word, Sacraments and Prayer diſpenſed.* But here again you come not home to our Que-

ſtion, Whether none are publique Aſſemblies, nay publique Aſſemblies of Saints, but ſuch as you conſtantly frequent, or whoſe diſcipline you own; however publique yours are. And then your Order is, *Notice ſhall be taken of all Perſons that forſake the publique Aſſemblies:* Notice of all Perſons in order to cenſure, ſo is your meaning, and purpoſe, as a little before you have ſaid we may gather from your Paper, to cenſure all Perſons that maintain private meetings in oppoſition to publique, whether out of conſcience or out of a principle of careleſneſs, ſloth, Worldlineſs, *&c.* All Perſons that crie down your Churches, Miniſtry, *&c.* is your purpoſe and meaning by that order. And you ſay further, *Neither do we tranſgreſs any Laws of the Land, which have made no* Proviſo *to exempt any man, that we medle with*, &c.

Here ſure you are miſtaken; for you can no more proceed to cenſure ſuch as forſake the publique Aſſemblies, by virtue of any Ordinance of Parliament, or rule laid down in your form of Church Government, then you, or any other Miniſter, or Magiſtrate civill or Eccleſiaſtical can puniſh them by an Act of 1. *Eliza.* Intituled, *An Act for Uniformity of Prayer, and Adminiſtration of Sacraments*; or by an Act of 35. *Eliza.* Intituled, *An Act, for puniſhing of Perſons, obſtinately refuſing to come to Church*, &c. Or an Act of 23. *Eliza.* againſt ſuch as refuſe to come to Church: All which with your Ordinance, are repealed by an Act made *Septemb.* 27. 1650. Intituled, *An Act for relief of Religious and peaceable people from the rigor of former Acts of Parliament in matters of Religion.* By which theſe are not onely repealed, but it is enacted further, *That all and every the branches, clauſes, Articles, and* Proviſo's *Expreſſed, and contained in any other Act or Ordinance of Parliament where by, or wherein any penalty or puniſhment is impoſed, or mentioned to be impoſed on any Perſon for not repayring to their reſpective Pariſh Churches*, &c. *ſhall be, and are by the Authority aforeſaid wholly repealed and made void.* None by this Act ſhall be cenſured or puniſhed by virtue of any former Act or Ordinance, for refuſing to come to their Pariſh Church, *&c.* though they obſtinately refuſe; And if by no former, then not by that you pretend to: Now to the end no prophane and licentious

centious Perſon may take occaſion by the repealing of the ſaid Laws (intended onely for relief of pious and peaceable minded people from the rigor of them) to neglect the performance of Religious duties: It is further enacted by the Authority aforeſaid, *That all and every Perſon and Perſons, within this Commonwealth, and the territories thereof, ſhall (having no reaſonable excuſe for their abſence) upon every Lords day, dayes of publique thanksgivings and humiliation, diligently reſort to ſome publique place, where the ſervice and worſhip of God is Exerciſed: or ſhall be preſent at ſome other place, in the practiſe of ſome Religious duty, either of Prayer, Preaching, reading or Expounding the Scriptures, or conferring upon the ſame.* And be it further declared by the Authority aforeſaid, *That every Perſon, and Perſons that ſhall not diligently perform the duties aforeſaid, according to the true meaning thereof (not having reaſonable excuſe to the contrary) ſhalbe deemed, and taken to be offenders againſt this Law, and ſhalbe proceeded againſt accordingly.*

Can you ſay now that you have power to cenſure ſuch as forſake the publique Aſſemblies, by any Ordinance of Parliament, or rules (as you call them) of your Church Government, when not onely the pious and peaceable minded people, but the obſtinate alſo are exempted from the rigor of former Laws, and onely taken to be offenders againſt this Law, and no other, and ſhalbe proceeded againſt accordingly? Dare you yet proceed to cenſure, notwithſtanding this Act? If you do, you are very bold, and may run into a *præmunire*: Though you ſay you are not to be blamed for any miſtakes, that may ariſe *ab ignorantia juris*, whether ſimple or affected: A ſtrang ſaying, we have heard it ſaid *Ignorantia facti excuſat*, but *Ignorantia juris non excuſat*, no not a ſimple ignorance much leſs an affected one.

To our next Quære, *Whether thoſe that forſake the publique Aſſemblies of the Saints in the* 2d *Order may not be taken for ſcandalous Perſons, and ſo comprehended in the* 3d? You Anſwer, We, conceiving your meaning to be ſuch, are not miſtaken: For they are really, and indeed ſcandalous, and ſo juſtly merit to be cenſured by you. And although we be not miſtaſten in

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our conceits of you, yet we muſt tell you, you are miſtaken in your own, to think you may bring in any that forſake your publique Aſſemblies, under that notion of a ſcandalous Perſon and ſo proceed to cenſure accordingly, for the reaſons we have given before: Nay, nor yet can you proceed to cenſure the more known ſcandalous in life, ſuch as you inſtance of Drunkards, ſwearers, and whore-maſters, they being all puniſhable by the civill Magiſtrate, as by the ſeveral Acts made for that purpoſe appeareth: And not by any Eccleſiaſtical, much leſs by your Elderſhips ſhort and blunt ſword of Excommunication, by any Laws now in force.

We are not ſo ſenſible of the Multiplicity of Canons, and burdenſomneſs of Ceremonies, under which, in the time of Epiſcopacy, any truely conſcientious did ſigh or groan, but if we may judge, *expede Herculem*, by the number of Canons already made in your Provincial Aſſemblies, and elſewhere in this ſhort uſurpation of Presbytery (many urged neceſſary *de fide*) what they would amount to, had you lived the Age of Epiſcopacy 1600. yeers, and upwards we might well crie out, *Quare onevamini ritibus?* and cenſure you as Dr *Andrews* doth *Bellarmine* in behalf of our Engliſh Church. *Nobis non tam Articuloſa fides quàm veſtris hominibus qui ad ſingulas Theſes crepant eſt de fide; Vobis quibus datum eſt veſtra omnia in eodem lumine videre, quibus veſtra omnia ab eodem proponente infallibili habere, abundare licet Articulis ad Arthritim uſque*, &c.

And now we are come to our laſt charge (as you call it) which as it is high ſo (you judge) it hath litle reaſon in it for the bearing it up: But how take you it off? Why firſt you obſerve, *That we omit to mention the firſt part of this order, and unto which that which follows in the two next orders doth refer.*

We grant it doth, but we ſay not to that onely, but to the later branch of that order alſo touching the Catechized Perſons, and therefore we ſay if they refuſe to preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip, by this your order the Miniſter muſt exhort and admoniſh them.

But that is wholly of our own adding, you ſay, and ſay it again, *Is wholly our own, and none of yours.* Why will you thus boldly averr ſo manifeſt an untruth? Is not the order expreſs, That

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the Miniſter, when he Catechiſeth the ſeverall families, ſhall exhort ſuch perſons in them, as he finds to be of competent knowledge, and are blameleſs of life; that they preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, &c? And do not your ſelves confeſſe, that you ſaid the Miniſter was to exhort, and that was all: But we adde, and ſay, He ſhall exhort and admoniſh. How can theſe words then be wholly our own, and none of yours? Becauſe we adde the word *Admoniſh*, therefore muſt the reſt be none of yours, but wholly ours?

But oh the learned Criticks of our age! to exhort and to admoniſh, are two different things which we confound together, taking them for one and the ſame, which is in us a radicall and grand miſtake.

What? every admonition a kind of Church cenſure, or in order (as you call it) thereto, no exhortation ſo? We confeſs our ignorance of ſuch a diſtinction, not having as yet learned it either from Scripture, Fathers, Councils, School-men, or any known approved Author; find it us in Scripture, you that are for the word of God alone: But in the mean time we muſt tell you, (if our Tranſlators erre not) they are promiſcuouſly uſed in Scripture; Read *Acts* 20. 31. *I ceaſed not to admoniſh every one of you with tears*; Is this more then to exhort? Was it in order to Church cenſure? Again, *Rom.* 15. 14. δυνάμενοι καὶ ἀλλήλους νουθετεῖν, *i.e. able to admoniſh one another*, ſay ſome Tranſlations, *able to exhort one another*, ſay others, is this a radical and grand miſtake in them? Again, *Col.* 3. 16. νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς, *i.e. admoniſhing your own ſelves.* Is this in order to Church-cenſure? Is it more then exhorting? Again, *Titus* 3. 1. *Admone illos*, ſaith *Hierom*, *Admone illos*, ſaith *Calvin*, upon the place: Our Engliſh Bibles, ſome render it *Admoniſh*, others (*Warne*) them to be ſubject, &c. Is this in order to Church cenſure? is it more then an Exhortation? Again, *Titus*, 2. 15. *Theſe things ſpeak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority*, Is to exhort, *Cum omni imperio*, with all Rule and Authority, leſs then to admoniſh? Nay more, Is private admonition a part of, or in order to Church cenſure according to Chriſts rule, *Mat.* 18? or according to St. *Pauls*, *Titus* 3. 10. *Poſt unam & alteram admonitionem*, Is that private admonition (we ſay) mentioned

oned in the firſt part of your 4th Order, againſt onely the ſcandalous, and forſakers of publique Aſſemblies: (and not the exhortation of the Miniſter, to ſuch as are of competent knowledge, and blameleſs of life, that they preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip) in order to Church cenſure? *Apage! Calvin* is clear againſt you upon that text of *Titus* 3. 10. ſaying, *Admonitionem Intelligit*, (Nempe Paulus) *non quamlibet vel privati Hominis, ſed quæ fit à Miniſtro publicâ Eccleſiæ authoritate*; So not every private admonition is in order to excommunication in *Calvins* judgement: then what more then an exhortation? Thus have not Scripture, nor *Calvin* noted this difference 'twixt an exhortation and admonition, nor can you (we believe) produce Fathers or Schoolmen, thoſe Criticks ſpeaking for you; nor hath Mr. *Leigh* in his *Critica Sacra* noted ſuch a difference, nor any we have read of; and yet it is in us a radical and grand miſtake.

Yes, and the Relative (*They*) is as grand a miſtake and errour in us, to apply it to the nearer, when as it muſt of neceſſity be referred to the remoter Antecedent, when the ſubject matter ſpoken of doth neceſſarily require it, as in this caſe it is clear it doth.

The fourth order runs thus (*viz.*) *That they ſhall be privately admoniſhed according to the order preſcribed by Chriſt*, Mat. 18. *once or twice, to ſee if they will reform* (thus far is in order to Church cenſure). *And the Miniſter when he Catechiſeth the ſeverall families, ſhall exhort* [The Miniſters exhortation is not ſo much as private admonition] *ſuch perſons in them as he finds to be of competent knowledge, and blameleſſe in life, that they preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, that they may be admitted to the Lords Supper.*

The 5th order runs thus, *viz.* (That if they will neither hearken to private admonition, nor &c.) The queſtion is now, to whom this Relative (*They*) refers. Your anſwer is; *Not to the laſt* [they,] *nor laſt but one: not to the blameleſſe in life, or competent of knowledg; but to two other* [*They's,*] *in two orders mentioned long before: Its not the to neareſt, or neareſt but one, but to the remoter, yea to the remoteſt Antecedent: And thoſe amongſt us that are Schollars know this well enough. This muſt be the conſtructi-*

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on, nor can any other be made of it, either from the rules of Grammer, Logick, or common reason, Satis hoc Magistraliter. We understood (as we do still) that the Relative (*They*) may refer to the remotest (*viz.*) to those that forsake the publick Assemblies in the 2d order, and the scandalous in the 3d order mentioned, but not excluding the nearest Antecedent (*viz.*) men of competent knowledge, and blameless life in the 4th order mentioned. And then our note of Attention (as you call it) stands good. Marke, men of competent knowledge, and blameleſſe in life, must be warned before all to reform.

But here your Criticism failes you in calling (*Mark*) a note of attention, not distinguishing so accurately betwixt *Marke* and *Hark*, as in the former buttneſſe betwixt Exhortation and Admonition; for *Hark*, is of attention properly, *Marke*, rather a note of observation. But this by the way; We return to the Relative (*They*) and to whom it refers in your construction; that is, to those that forsake the publick assemblies of Saints, and turn their backs on the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in the 2d order mentioned, and to the scandalous persons mentioned in the 3d. to these, and none but these, your censures extend. Such as the Minister finds knowing and blamleſſe in life, shall not be debarred the Sacrament; though they present not themselves to the Elderſhip. This you say, because very shame will not suffer you to affirm the contrary: But where's your practise all the while? or how observe you the rules you walk by? laid down as you tell us in the form of Church-Government, to which you refer us for further Information, wherein is given power to the Congregationall Elderſhip, as they shall see just occasion to inquire into the knowledge and spirituall estate of any member of the Congregation, to admoniſh, rebuke, suſpend, excommunicate, &c. And you tell us this power of judgment and examination, of such as are knowing, and blameleſſe in life, is not to any one Miniſter, but in the Elderſhip, by virtue of this Ordinance, or form of Church-Government, which not onely justifies (you say) all that is practised in that case by the severall Elderships, but also shewes what ground you had for that was mentioned in your Paper, touching both what is therein appointed to the Miniſter about Cate-

chiſing families; and alſo concerning the Miniſters exhorting ſuch as in the ſeveral families he ſhould find to be of competent knowledge, and knew to be of blameleſs life, that they ſhould preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip, the triall and judgment in this caſe, not belonging to any one Miniſter alone, but to the Elderſhip.

Muſt they not preſent themſelves by virtue of this Ordinance before the Elderſhip (who have onely the power of judging, who are knowing and blameleſſe in life, and not any one Miniſter) before they can be admitted to the Sacrament, notwithſtanding the Miniſter finds them, and approves them as knowing and blameleſſe? and is not your practice accordingly? why then do you thus mince you matter, and ſeek to colour over your actions with a ſeeming deniall of all, with ſo many weak ſenſleſs and unheard of deſcants upon *nouns* and *pronouns*, to evade what ſtill you practice, but are aſhamed to own? either ſpeak out and ſay (as the truth is) that all knowing and blameleſſe in life, as well as the ignorant and ſcandalous, are to be debarred the Sacrament, unleſs they preſent themſelves before the Elderſhip, who only have the power to inquire into the knowledge and ſpirituall eſtate of all, to admoniſh, to ſuſpend, &c. by virtue of the Ordinance aforeſaid, which is the rule you walk by, or elſe wave it (as we do) as repealed, and of no force and ſtrength at this day: and then muſt you ſay with us, all you have heretofore ſaid concerning the civill Sanction of your Church-Government, is nothing at all to purpoſe: And this our Charge, as it is high, ſo it is weighty, to the depreſſing of the Presbyterian Government, and well may be called the laſt, being the *Summa Totalis*, and upſhot of all.

Subſcribed by us whoſe names are underwritten, by the conſent and on the behalf of many others.

Mancheſter the 13th of *April*, 1658

Ferdinando Stanley,
Nicho. Moſeley,
Iſaac Allen,
Thomas Preſtwich,
Leonard Egerton.

FINIS.

But as for those that are conscious to themselves, that they are very ignorant, if these should be called forth to publique Catechizing, it were more likely to drive them from the publique Assembly, and so from the use of all means for their information, then be availeable to this end. As touching what was propounded by us in our paper, as the way for their information (though it was not intended for any such a purpose as to exclude publique Catechizing) it was done in way of condescension to the weakest, and to shew our willingness to apply our selves to any course, so we might be instrumentall to bring poor dark and blinde Souls to the knowledge of Christ, and which in our Judgement is more likely to be attained in many, as the case stands with them, in a more private way of Catechizing in any of the wayes propounded by us, then if we should Catechize all the severall Families publiquely before the whole congregation.

(2) Touching those *that erre so grossely, whether in Doctrinals or points of discipline, thereby renting from a true constituted Church*, you say, *we speak nothing, either of their sin or punishment, yet you hope, we with you do hold, that the Churches lawfull Pastors have the power of the keyes committed to them, to excommunicate such offenders.*

We have given you the reason already, why we made not such expresse mention of these offenders, as of the former, although (as you will hereafter perceive) we are not wholly silent touching either the sin or punishment of these. Onely at present, because you profess to allow of that previous course of admonition prescribed by Christ, in reference to the scandalous *Mat.* 18. before they be excommunicated, but here say nothing of any such course to be taken with the heretically or schismatically; (though we hope also of you, that you disallow it not) we shall briefly declare, what course is to be held by the rules of the Presbyterian Government, before the sentence of excommunication pass against these offenders, and whereof our paper was not silent. This Government, however it gives no toleration to *any such errours, as subvert the faith; or any other errours, which overthrow the power of godliness; if the party, who holds them, spreads them, seeking to draw*

draw others after him, or to any such practises, as in their own nature manifestly subvert that order, Unity and Peace, which Christ hath established in his Church. These being offences censured by this Government, (and of which further afterward,) yet this Government prescribes the exercise of patience and long suffering (even toward those that do grossely erre in Doctrine as well as toward those that are scandalous in life) in the use of all means for the convincing them of their errours; by reasoning with them out of the Scriptures: as we see was practised in the Synod, that was held at *Jerusalem*; and as we see the Fathers of the *Nicene* Council, did not disdain to reason and dispute with *Arrius* (though he denyed the Deity of Christ) before they condemned him: And as also other Fathers did with other Hereticks in the Synods, although oftentimes in vain. That so none might have any just cause to complain, that they were condemned, before they were fully heard. And as touching such as run into such practices, as in their own nature tend manifestly to the subverting of that order and unity which Christ hath established in the Church, it labours with these also in the use of all gentle means to reclaim them, and bring them back again to the Church they have rent themselves from, before it proceed to censure. As it doth also put a difference between the seducers, and ring-leaders of a Sect, and those that are misled. Having respect not only to the nature of the offence, but also to the quality of the offender; and exerciseth patience and forbearance towards all, so long as there is any hope of reducing them by milde correction: Being ever more desireous to heal, then cut off any member. And thus having declared our selves in this, we go on with you.

(3) For you say; *For such as are scandalous and wicked in their lives, admonition private and publique is to be observed, according to Christs rule* Mat. 18. *But if they still continue, and will not reform, the Churches lawfull Pastors have power to excommunicate such.*

In this you fully come up to what we hold, as to the means, that is to be used for the reformation of these, and we are glad there is an agreement in judgement betwixt you and us thus far. Neither can we see how, upon this concession, you can in reason

son finde fault with our proceedings, if there should be occasion for our censuring any such persons, as for their notorious offences and their obstinacy therein, might justly merit the highest censure.

For however, perhaps you may say, you stumble chiefely at this, that our ruling Elders (that in your judgement may be but meer Lay-men) do joyn in the Government with us; yet we see not how this can be any just ground of scruple to any of you, who (if we mistake not) were all of you satisfied in your consciences touching the lawfulness of the late Government of Episcopacy, as it was then exercised, at least as to submission to it; and wherein High-Commissioners, Chancelors and Commissaries (that were as much Lay-men then, as ruling Elders can be in your judgement now) had so great a share, as to suspend Ministers from the exercise of their Ministry, upon such complaints as, according to the orders, that were appointed in those dayes, they might take cognizance of, and so far, as to decree the sentence of excommunication against them and others, as there was occasion for it.

But here we must yet further protest, we do not know, whom you mean by lawfull Pastors, to whom you here grant the
Dr Hammond. power of excommunication. Some we know, there are, that would make the Diocesan Bishops the onely Pastors of the Church, and that other Ministers do but officiate by deputation from them and under them. We hope you are not of the minde of these. For then, as the dissent in judgement betwixt you and us would be far greater, then as yet we apprehend it is; so hence it will follow, that, till Prelacy should be restored, there must not (if you would provide for the safety of the persons and estates of them that should manage the Government) be the dispencing of any Church censures at all. For you may easily know, that not only by Acts and Ordinances of Parliament before made for the abolishing of Archbishops and Bishops, &c. (and which are confirmed by the late humble Advice assented unto by his Highness *sect.* 12.) the office and jurisdiction of Diocesan Bishops is taken away. But there is yet a further Barre put in against Prelacy in the 11. *sect.* of the aforesaid humble Advice; where it is expressly cautioned, (and

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we judge it was out of a conscientious mindfulness of what had been in those very termes covenanted against) that the liberty, that is granted to some, be not extended to Popery and Prelacy. And therefore if any Diocesan Bishop should exercise his jurisdiction, and excommunicate any person within this Land, wherein by Authority (as you may see afterward) there is also an appointment of another Government, we leave it to those, that are learned in the Law to determine, whether such Diocesan Bishops would not run themselves into a *præmunire*.

But if you do not restrain lawfull Pastors to these onely, our doubt yet is, Whether you mean not onely such Ministers, as were ordained by Diocesan Bishops, excluding those out of the number, that, since their being taken away, have been ordained by Presbyters onely?

If this be your sense, we shall onely at present minde you, of what is published, to be the Judgement of Dr *Usher* late Primate of *Ireland*, in a Book lately put forth by Dr *Bernard*, Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Grayes-Inne*; and whom, though a stranger to us, and one of a different judgement from us in the point of Episcopacy, yet we reverence for his moderation and profession of his desires for peace, *wishing that such, as do consent in substantials for matter of Doctrine, would consider of some conjunction in point of Discipline. That private interests and circumstantials might not keep them thus far asunder.* In which wish as we do cordially joyn our selves, so we heartily desire, that all godly and moderate spirited men throughout the Land would also close. But the book, which the said Doctor hath lately published, is intituled. *The Judgement of the late Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of* Ireland, *&c.* In this Book this Doctor tells us, that the late Primate in Answer to a letter of his (sent to him as it should seem for that purpose) declares his Judgement touching the ordination of the Ministry in th Reformed Churches in *France* and *Holland*. There he saith, that *Episcopus & Presbyter gradu tantum differunt, non ordine.* And consequently, that in places, where Bishops cannot be had, the ordination by Presbyters standeth valid. And in the close of his Answer about this point he saith; *That for the testifying*

* See pag. 149. of his last Book.

teſtifying of his Communion with the Churches (of the *Low-Countryes*) of whom he had ſpoken immediately before: and which he there profeſſeth, *He doth love and honour as true members of the Univerſall Church:* (notwithſtanding the difference, that was betwixt him and them about the point of Epiſcopacy) he doth profeſs, *That with like affection he ſhould receive the bleſſed* Sacrament *at the hands of the Dutch Miniſters, if he were in* Holland, *as he ſhould do at the hands of the French Miniſters if, he were in* Charenton. See *pag.* 125. and 126. Hence you may perceive, that the Judgement of D^r *Uſher* was; That the Ordination of Presbyters, where Biſhops cannot be had, ſtandeth valid. And conſequently, if you be of his opinion, (and you muſt have ſtronger reaſons, then ever yet we have ſeen, to bear you out therein if you judge otherwiſe) they ought to be eſteemed lawfull Paſtors, to whom you grant the power of Excommunication, Biſhops being now taken away, and may not therefore ordain according to the preſent Laws of the Land. The ſaid Dr *Bernard* hath ſome animadvertiſements upon that Letter (in which D^r *Uſher* doth deliver his judgement, as above ſaid) and there ſhews, that he was not in this Judgement of his ſingular. He alledgeth Dr *Davenant*, that pious and learned Biſhop of *Sarisbury*, as conſenting with him in it (in his determinations *queſt.* 42.) and produceth the principall of the Schooleman, *Gulielmus Pariſienſis, Gerſon, Durand*; &c. and declares it to be the Generall opinion of the Schoolemen; *Epiſcopatum ut diſtinguitur à ſimplici ſacerdotio non eſſe alium ordinem*, &c. ſee *pag.* 130. of the aforenamed Book, as alſo *pag.* 131. 132. Where the concurrence of Dr *Davenant* with D^r *Uſher* in his judgement about this matter is declared more fully. He addes alſo others, as in ſpeciall, Dr *Richard Field* in his learned Book of the Church *lib.* 3. *cap.* 39. and *lib.* 5. *cap.* 27. And alſo that Book intituled *A defence of the Ordination of the Miniſters of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, maintained by Archdeacon* Maſon *againſt the Romaniſts.* And further he ſaith; *He hath been aſſured, it was not onely the Judgement of Biſhop* Overall, *but that he had a principall hand in it.* He tell us, *that the fore-mentioned Author produceth many teſtimonies; The M^r of the Sentences, and moſt of the Schoolemen,*

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Boniventure, Thomas Aquinas, Durand, Dominicus Soto, Richardus Armachanus, Toſtatus, Alphonſus a Caſtro, Gerſon, Petrus Caniſius, *to have affirmed the ſame; and at laſt* Quereth Medina *a principall Biſhop of the Councill of* Trent, *who affirmed, That* Jerome, Ambroſe, Auguſtine, Sedulius, Primaſius, Chryſoſtome, Theodoret, Theophylact *were of the ſame judgment alſo.* But you may ſee theſe things your ſelves in Dr *Bernard, pag.* 132, 133, 134. Wee have been onely at the pains to tranſcribe them.

Wee could alledg many more Teſtimonies to prove this: But wee count theſe ſufficient; and do alledg theſe the rather, becauſe brought by one that is of the ſame Judgment with you, as wee ſuppoſe.

But having declared how farr you accord with us in Judgment, touching the way of informing the ignorant, and reforming the wicked perſons, and ſchiſmatical, *&c.* you tell us; *That you are not therein ſo wavering and unſettled in your apprehenſions of the Caſe, as to ſubmit either it or them, either wholly or in part, to the contrary Judgment and determination of a general Councill of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches, much leſſe to a new termed Provincial Aſſembly at* Preſton; *wherein you profeſſe no little to differ from us.*

That, which wee ſubmitted wholly to the Judgment of the Provincial Aſſembly, was not, whether Catechizing was a way appointed by God in his Word, for the information of the ignorant; but in what way of Catechizing (as is expreſſed in our Paper) the ignorant in our Congregations, who never offered themſelves unto the Sacrament, were moſt like to be brought to ſome meaſure of knowledg; and which is not a matter of Doctrine but of Order onely. Neither was it by us ſubmitted to that Aſſembly; whether the cenſures of the Church were the means appointed by Chriſt for the reforming of the ſcandalous? But whether it might not be meet *pro hic & nunc*, and as the preſent caſe ſtood, to apply the Cenſures? (and ſo put in practice at this time that, which in the General wee were ſufficiently aſſured from the word of Truth, was the way for their reformation) and with which wee were both by God and Man intruſted to diſpenſe unto thoſe that were openly ſcandalous in

our Congregations; However they contented themselves to live in the want of the Lords Supper, nor ever presented themselves to the Eldership to be admitted to it. And this (because meerely circumstantiall, as to the dispencing of the Censures at this time and to such Persons) we think herein we owed the Provinciall Assembly (unto whose Authority we professe our selves to be subject) so much respect and duty, as to submit our apprehensions in a Case of this nature (which they had propounded unto us to be seriously weighed, as they had done to the rest of the Classes within this Province) unto their Judgement, and to take their concurrent approvall along with us, before we proceeded to practise in a matter of this weight. And yet we have declared before, That however we are not so wavering and unsettled in matters of faith, as to resolve our belief into the determination of *Synods* or Councils, believing no more, nor no otherwise, then as they determine: Yet that it is not out of the compass of the authority of a *Synod* to examine, try and authoritatively to censure Doctrines as well as matters of Discipline. And we think (how confident soever you may be of the soundness and orthodoxness of what in your Paper you propound in way of exception against any thing in ours) you have not such clear and inquestionable grounds from Scripture for the same, that you were to be accused of wavering or unsettledness, if you had submitted the same to have been examined and tried by a Provincial Assembly: and much less, if you could have had the opportunity of submitting it to the Censure of a General Council.

But whereas mentioning our Provincial Assembly at *Preston*, you call it a new termed *Provincial Assembly*. If your meaning be, that the terming it a Provincial Assembly in stead of a Provincial *Synod* is a new term, then this is but onely a *Logomachia*, and not much to be insisted on. Although we frequently call it a Provincial *Synod* as well as a Provincial Assembly. But if your meaning be; *That it is a new termed Provincial Assembly at* Preston. Because Provinciall *Synods* or Assemblies have been held but lately at *Preston*, we see not (if Provincial Assemblies be warrantable, and have been of ancient use in the Church) that having been long in dis-use, they begin of late

lare to be held at *Preston*, that can justly incurre your censure. But if the Antiquity of such Assemblies be that you question: Then we referre you to what Dr *Bernard* in the Book of his above quoted, shews was the Judgement of Dr *Usher* (who is acknowledged by all that know him, or are acquainted with his works, to have been a great Antiquary; however we alleadge him not, that you should build your faith upon his Testimony) and which we think may be sufficient to vindicate Provincial Assemblies in your thoughts from all suspition of novelty. In that Book you have in the close of it proposals touching the Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of *Synodical* Government received in the ancient Church. And it thus begins. *By the Order of the Church of* England, *all Presbyters are charged to administer the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Realm hath received. And that they might the better understand, what the Lord hath commanded herein, The exhortation of* Paul *to the Elders of* Ephesus Acts 20. 28. *is appointed to be read unto them at the time of their Ordination.* A little after it is acknowledged, *That* Ignatius *by Presbytery mentioned by* Paul 1 Tim. 4. 14. *did understand the Community of the rest of the Presbyters or Elders, who then had a hand, not only in the delivery of the Doctrine and Sacraments, but also in the administration of the Discipline of Christ.* And for further proof. Tertullian *is alleadged in his Generall Apologie for Christians. Where he saith, that in the Church are used exhortations, chastisements and divine censure; For Judgement is given with great advice, as among those, who are certain, they are in the sight of God. And it is the chiefest foreshewing of the judgement to come, if any man have so offended, that he be banished from the Communion of Prayer, and of the Assembly, and of all holy Fellowship. The Presidents, that bear rule therein, are certain approved Elders, who have obtained this honour, not by reward, but by good report. There also is further shewed, That in matters of Ecclesiastical judicature,* Cornelius *Bishop of* Rome *used the received form of gathering together the Presbytery. And that* Cyprian *sufficiently declares of what Persons that consisted; When he wisheth him to read his Letter to the flourishing Clergy, which there did preside*

or rule with him. And further, That in the 4th Council of Carthage *it was concluded. That the Bishop might hear no mans cause without the presence of the Clergy. And that otherwise the Bishops sentence should be void, unless it were confirmed by the Clergy. And yet further. That this is found inserted into the Canons of* Egbert (*who was Archbishop of* York *in the* Saxon *times*) *and afterwards into the body of the Canon law it self. It is here also acknowledged, That in our Church, this kind of Presbyterian Government hath been much disused. Yet that it did professe, that every Pastor hath a right to rule the Church* (*from whence also the name of Rector was at first given unto him*) *and administer the Discipline of Christ, as well as to dispence the Doctrine and Sacraments*, &c. By all which it is acknowledged, and also proved; That the form of Government by the united suffrages of the Clergy, is ancient: and which is there in expres termes esserted; as it might be demonstrated by many more Testimonies, but that we conceive these already mentioned are sufficient, and being alleadged by the aforementioned Author, As also evidencing what his own Judgement was in this point, may be more likely to sway with you (if in that there should be a dissent betwixt you and us) then any thing, that we could our selves produce. But in this reduction of Episcopacy to the form of *Synodical* Government received in the ancient Church, there are proposals of Assemblies of Pastors within certain limited bounds. Which (saving that they are some of them somewhat larger then ours, which is but a circumstantial difference) do hold proportion with the Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies, mentioned in the form of our Church Government. As also the times propounded there for their meeting, the power of those Assemblies, and what they were to have Cognizance of, and the subordination of the lesser to the greater, with liberty of Appeal, if need should require, and are the same in substance as with us. And all these were propounded, as the way of Government in the ancient Church, and in the year 1641. (after the troubles, that had risen in *Scotland* about Episcopacy and the Ceremonies, and before the setting up of the Presbyterian Government in this Land,) had so much as fallen under debate in the Parliament,

so

ſo far as ever we heard of) as an expedient to prevent the troubles, that did after ariſe in this Land about the matter of Church Government, being for the moderating of Epiſcopacy; That at that time was grown to that height, that it had quite taken away from the Paſtors that rule, that of right did belong unto them; And for the Reduction of it to the ancient form of *Synodicall* Government. And therefore in the Judgement of this learned and reverend Antiquary, our Provincial Aſſembly at *Preſton* (where the Paſtors of the Churches are members, as he acknowledgeth of right they ought to be in ſuch Aſſemblies) would not have been accounted a new termed Provincial Aſſembly.

But you go on and tell us. *That other parts of our Paper are full of darkneſs, to which you ſay, you cannot ſo fully aſſent, till further explicated and unfolded by us.*

We cannot apprehend any ſuch darkneſs in our Paper, as you ſpeak of. But yet becauſe in yours, you queſtion what authority we have from the civil Magiſtrate, for what we do, and likewiſe the extent of it: and your miſtakes of our meaning may perhaps ſome of them ariſe from your unacquaintedneſs with the rule we walk by. Although we were not to be blamed for any miſtakes, that might ariſe *ab ignorantia juris* (whether ſimple or affected, that we determine not, but leave you to examine;) Before we come to make Anſwer more particularly to what follows, we are willing to be at ſome paines to give you ſome further account of the power we are awarranted by the civil Authority, for to exerciſe. To what perſons within our bounds it extends it ſelf: and what ſome of thoſe rules are, that are preſcribed unto us by civil Authority, to walk by in the exerciſe of that power we are betruſted with.

It is a general and common miſtake amongſt many, that the Presbyterian Government was eſtabliſhed by the Parliament but for three yeers, and that therefore it is now expired and out of date. But if you peruſe all that paſſed in Parliament touching it, no ſuch matter will appear. *The directions of the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament; after advice had with the Aſſembly of Divines, for the Electing and chuſing Ruling Elders in all the Congregations, and in the Claſſical Aſſemblies,*

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for the Cities of London *and* Westminster, *and the ſeverall* Counties *of the* Kingdom, *For the ſpeedy ſetling of the Presbyterian Government, bearing date* Auguſt. 19. 1645. *Their Ordinance together with Rules and Directions, concerning ſuſpenſion from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, in caſes of Ignorance and ſcandall, dated* Octob. 20. 1645. *The Votes alſo of the ſaid Houſes for the Choiſe of Elders throughout the* Kingdom *of* England *and Dominion of* Wales *in the reſpective Pariſh Churches and Chappels, according to the directions before mentioned. And touching the power granted to the Tryers of Elections of Elders, Of the date of* Feb. 20. 1645. *and* Feb. 26. 1645. *Their Ordinance for keeping ſcandalous Perſons from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; the inabling of Congregations for the chooſe of Elders, and ſupplying of defects in former Ordinances and Directions of Parliament concerning Church Government, bearing date* March 14. 1645. *The Remedies preſcribed by them for removing ſome obſtructions in Church Government, dated* Aprill. 22d 1647. *And their Ordinance for the ſpeedy dividing and ſetling the ſeverall* Counties *of this* Kingdom *into diſtinct Claſſicall Presbyteries and Congregationall Elderſhips, dated* Jan. 29. 1647. We ſay, all theſe were paſſed abſolutely without any proviſo's at all, limiting the time of their continuance, that is expreſſed in any of them. Indeed in the Ordinance of Parliament giving power to all the Claſſical Presbyteries within their reſpective bounds, to examine, approve and ordain Miniſters for ſeverall Congregations, dated *Nov.* 10. 1645. It is provided in the Cloſe of it, *That it ſhall ſtand in force for twelve moneths, and no longer.* As it is provided in another Ordinance for the Ordination of Miniſters by the Claſſicall Presbyters within their reſpective bounds for the ſeverall Congregations in the *Kingdom* of, *England* bearing date *Auguſt.* 28. 1646. *That it ſhall ſtand in force for three years and no longer.* Which latter might give to ſome (that took but the matter upon report) an occaſion to conceive, that the Presbyterian Government was ſettled but for three years. Although that was but ill applied to all the ſeverall Ordinances that had paſſed before, which belonged onely to one. But the Ordinance eſpecially, from which chiefely (as we conceive) the miſtake aroſe about

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ſettling the Presbyterian Government for three years onely, was the Ordinance that paſſed *June* 5. 1646. The title whereof is, *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Aſſembled in Parliament, for the preſent ſettling (without further delay) of the Presbyteriall Government in the Church of* England. In the Cloſe whereof it is ordained. *That this Ordinance ſhall continue for the ſpace of three years, and no longer, unleſs both Houſes think fit to continue it. But if the matter of this Ordinance be conſulted, it is manifeſt it was but touching a Committee of Lords and Commons to adjudge and determine ſcandalous offences not formerly enumerated, appointed by the Ordinance in ſtead and place of Commiſſioners mentioned in the Ordinance of* March 14. 1645. *And alſo ſhewing how the Elderſhips were to proceed in the examination of ſuch ſcandalous offences. And touching what power was granted to the ſaid Committee, and in what ſort they were to proceed, as is clear to any, that ſhall but take the paines to peruſe that Ordinance.* The ground whereof in the preface to it, is made to be this. *The Lords and Commons in Parliament holding their former reſolution, that all notorious and ſcandalous offenders ſhall be kept from the Sacrament, have thought fit to make a further addition to the ſcandalous offences formerly enumerated, for which men ſhall be kept back from the Sacrament. And leaſt the ſtay of the enumeration, and the not naming of Commiſſioners to judge of Caſes not enumerated, ſhould hinder the putting in execution the Presbyterian Government already eſtabliſhed, They have thought fit,* &c. *And do therefore ordain a Committee (therein particularly nominated) in ſtead and place of Commiſſioners.*

The groundleſneſs of the miſtake about ſettling the Presbyterial Government for three years onely, that might ariſe from the proviſo in this Ordinance, is ſo clear to any common underſtanding, that the bare recitall of the ſum of the matter of this Ordinance, and the ground of making it, doth make it ſo fully to appear, that it were but loſt labour to uſe any more words about it. But we have particularly mentioned all that ever paſſed the Parliament (ſo far as we have either ſeen or heard of) that hitherto concerned Church Government, until the year 1648. *When the form of Church Government is*

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be used in the Church of England *and* Ireland *was agreed upon by the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament, after Advice had with the Assembly of Divines, and was ordered by them to be printed* August. 19. *of the said* year 1648. And this Ordinance (wherein all that had passed the Parliament before in parts, and at severall times, and what ever was but temporary, by vertue of other Ordinances (so far as was intended for continuance) are moulded up into a complete body, with a supply of sundry things that had been never mentioned not published before in other Ordinances) is without any limitation of time for its continuance, and remains unrepealed to this day, for any thing we have seen or heard to the contrary. Nay we think (as we shall touch upon anon) That by the humble Advice, assented to by his Highness, this Ordinance (as well as others) receives strength.

But by this full account given, we think we have made it sufficiently to appear, that we have had the Authority of the civill Magistrate to bear us out, in what we have acted since the first setting up of the Presbyterian Government untill this present. Except there be any, that can come forth, and charge us to have transgressed the rules appointed by the Parliament for us to observe in our actings, against which our own innocency only shall be our defence.

It now remaines for your further satisfaction and our own vindication, that we recite some things particularly out of the form of Church Government, which we conceive are thereunto subservient.

In the very first Words of the Ordinance (according to what we have before recited in the directions for the electing and chooſing of ruling Elders, and is there also to be found) you may find it thus. *Be it ordered and ordained by the Lords and Commons in Parliament Assembled and by Authority of the same, That all Parishes and Places whatsoever within the* Kingdom *of* England *and Dominion of* Wales, (*as well Priviledged Places and exempted jurisdictions, as others*) *be brought under the Government of Congregationall, Classicall, Provinciall and Nationall Assemblies*, &c. Where it is to us unquestionable, That by vertue of this appointment, such as live within the bounds

of

of our ſeverall congregations and Pariſhes are under the power of ſome one or other of the Congregational Elderſhips, conſtituted by Authority of Parliament within our ſeverall Pariſhes; And that all thoſe, that live within the bounds of our Claſſis (mentioned before) are under the power of our Claſſicall Aſſembly, conſtituted in like manner by the ſaid Authority.

What power is given particularly to the congregationall Elderſhips, you may finde in the aforeſaid form of Church Government, and unto which we refer you; onely we ſhall minde you, *That by vertue thereof, they have power, as they ſhall ſee juſt occaſion, to enquire into the knowledge and ſpirituall eſtate of any member of the Congregation to admoniſh, and rebuke, to ſuſpend from the Lords Table, thoſe who are found by them, to be ignorant and ſcandalous, and to excommunicate according to the rules and directions after following.* And it is thereby ordained, *That the Examination and Judgement of ſuch Perſons, as ſhall for their ignorance in the points of Religion, mentioned in that Ordinance, not be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is to be in the power of the Elderſhip of every Congregation.* All which will appear by the expreſs Letter of the ſaid Ordinance, to any, that will conſult it, and which not only juſtifies all that is practiſed in that caſe by the ſeverall Elderſhips, but alſo ſhews what grounds this Claſſis had for that which was mentioned in our Paper, touching both what is therein appointed to the Miniſter about Catechizing Families, and alſo concerning the Miniſters exhorting ſuch, as in the ſeverall Families he ſhould finde to be of competent knowledge, and know to be of blameleſs life, That they ſhould preſent themſelves to the Elderſhip; The Triall and Judgement in this caſe not belonging to any one Miniſter alone, but to the Elderſhip.

There are alſo rules and directions given in this Ordinance to be obſerved by the ſeverall Elderſhips, concerning ſuſpenſion from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in caſes of ſcandall, which may be ſeen there particularly. But there is no rule given, that will allow either the Elderſhip or Claſſis, according to the ſeveral powers to them therein granted, either to warn before all, or to excommunicate knowing and blameleſs men

for their meer not presenting themselves before the Eldership.

The rules of this Government prescribe otherwise; as we our selves must also needs profess, that we are not conscious to our selves, that we have given any just occasion by our management thereof, That contrary to the expres rules appointed therein to be observed by us, and to the plain sense of our expressions used in our Paper (of which afterward,) any such a thing should have been so much as supposed to have been intended from any thing there expressed.

Give us leave to proceed a little further, to lay open the order that is prescribed in the above mentioned form of Church Government, touching the order of proceeding to excommunication; which as it will awarrant the publishing of mens names openly in the Congregation, and warning them before all to reform, being such as are justly censurable by the rules thereof, and particularly where it prescribes, *that several publique admonitions shall be given to the offenders*, &c. So it will awarrant us in any thing, that is made censurable by that Paper of ours, that was published.

To make this to appear, as also to shew what reason, we had to make known to the several congregations within our bounds, what our Paper held forth. We shall here declare, what offences are censurable with this greatest and last censure of Excommunication, according to the order, that is there prescribed, and which, as it requires, *that it be inflicted with great and mature deliberation, and after all other good means have been essayed*; so it appoints in these expres Words.

That such Errours in practice as subvert the Faith, or any other Errours, which overthrow the power of Godliness; if the party who holds them, spread them, seeking to draw others after him; and such sins in practice, as cause the Name and Truth of God to be blasphemed, cannot stand with the power of godliness; and such practises, as in their own nature manifestly subvert that order, unity and Peace, which Christ hath established in his Church; and particularly all those scandalous sins, for which any Person is to be suspended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, obstinately persisted in; these being publiquely known, to the just scandall

dall of the Church; The ſentence of Excommunication may and ought to proceed, according to the directions after following.

But the Perſons, that hold other Errours in Judgement, about which learned and Godly men poſſibly may and do differ, and which ſubvert not the faith, nor are deſtructive to godlineſs, or that be guilty of ſuch ſins of infirmities, as are commonly found in the Children of God. or being otherwiſe ſound in the faith, and holy in life (and ſo not falling under cenſure by the former rules) endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the band of Peace; and do yet out of conſcience, yeeld up to the obſervation of all thoſe rules, which are or ſhall be eſtabliſhed by Authority, for regulating the outward worſhip of God, and Government of his Church. The ſentence of excommunication for theſe cauſes ſhall not be denounced againſt them.

Theſe things this Claſſis taking into Conſideration, together with the power they were betruſted with by God and Man, for the diſpencing the cenſures of the Church, in the caſes cenſurable by the rules here laid down and elſewhere, in the form of Church Government: And there having been in the Provinciall Aſſembly ſeverall debates touching ſuch Perſons as in the ſeveral Congregations were ignorant and ſcandalous, who offered not themſelves to the Sacrament, nor to the Elderſhip in order to their admiſſion to it: and they commending it to the ſeveral Claſſical Presbyteries to be conſidered of, whether ſome further courſe was not to be held, for the information of the one, and the reformation of the other, then yet had been taken, notwithſtanding their neglect; and what they judged fitteſt to be done for the attaining thoſe ends; and to repreſent their thoughts therein to the next Aſſembly. This Claſſis upon the whole concluded to repreſent their apprehenſions in the Caſe, as is expreſſed in the Paper that was publiſhed, which was approved of before by the Provincial Aſſembly, and which they judge is ſufficiently awarranted, in regard of any thing therein contained, by the rules expreſſed in the above mentioned form of Church Government.

We having thus far ſhewed what we have been, and are awarranted to practice by the ſeveral Ordinances above mentioned, we ſhall now proceed further to declare. That how-

ever we are no Lawyers, and therefore leave the determination of the Case to the learned in the Law to judge of, to whom it belongs: yet if it may be lawfull for us to judge of a matter of this nature from the principles of reason; It seems to us, that the above mentioned Ordinances about Church Government, as well as other Ordinances of Parliament, are confirmed in the humble Advice assented unto by his Highness in the 16. section thereof. Where we finde these Words. *And that nothing contained in this Petition and Advice, nor your Highness consent thereunto, shall be construed to extend to the repealing or making void of any Act or Ordinance, which is not contrary hereunto, or to the matters herein contained. But that the said Acts and Ordinances, not contrary hereunto, shall continue and remain in force, in such manner, as if this present Petition and Advice had not at all been had or made, or your Highness consent thereunto given.* Whence we gather, that if in the several Ordinances for Church Government, there be nothing contrary to the humble Advice, or to the matters therein contained, they are not thereby (any more then any other Acts or Ordinances of Parliament) repealed, but left to remain in force. At least, there seems to us to be a plain intimation, that they have a force in them; which is not by this humble Advice repealed and made void. For it doth not appear to us, That there is any thing in the Form of Church Government, or any other Ordinances of Parliament about that matter; that is contrary to the humble Advice or matters therein contained. And whereas in the 11th section there is mention made of some that differ in worship and discipline from the publique profession of these Nations held forth, to whom some indulgence is granted; It seems to us, there is an acknowledgement and owning of what the late Parliament held forth, in regard of these the Directory for worship and form of Church Government, which they passed, as the publique profession of these Nations in regard of worship and discipline. And in which apprehensions we are the more confirmed, because here in this section, mention is made of a confession of faith to be agreed on by his Highness and the Parliament, there having nothing in that kind passed the late Parliament, that established the Directory

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for worship and form of Church Government. However there had been a Confession of faith drawn up by the late Assembly of Divines; Whence it seems to us clear, that they own the Directory for worship, and the form of Church Government, to be that which they hold forth, as the publique profession of the Nation for worship and Government. To the same purpose we find in the Government of the Commonwealth of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, &c. As it was publiquely declared at *Westminster Decemb.* 16. 1653. *pag.* 43. *Sect.* 37. *Where also they express a worship and Discipline publiquely held forth, which must needs referre to the Directory and form of Church Government by us recited*; There being no other worship or discipline, that then had, or now hath, the civill Sanction, in this Nation.

We have been large, in what we have here represented in the generall, before we come to speak more particularly to the rest, that now follows in your Paper. But our pains being greater to make this full representation unto you, then it will be for you to read it, we must intreat you to excuse us, considering it tends as well to rectifie your mistakes, as to vindicate our selves, being also desirous not to be mistaken any more, as also because it layes a foundation for our briefer and more particular Answer unto what follows, and to which (these things being thus premised) we now come.

In the things, wherein you profess your selves to dissent, till further explicated and unfolded by us.

(1) The first thing we meet with here is; That by the many Persons of all sorts, that are members of Congregations, and mentioned in our Paper, in your sense thereof we seem to hint, that thereby we mean onely such, *who have admitted themselves members of some Congregation within our association, and yet live inordinately*; &c. *And that therefore you, who never were any members or associates of ours, are not within the verge and compass of our Presbyterian discipline*, &c. Unto which we say; That we have constantly professed against those of the separation. That the several Assemblies of Congregations within this Land, that make a profession of the true Christian and Apostolique Faith; are true Churches of Jesus Christ.

Christ. That the several members of these Congregations are by their birth, members, as those that were born in the Jewish Church, are said to be, by the Apostle, Jews by nature: *Gal.* 2. That this their membership was sealed to them in their Baptism, that did solemnly admit them, as into the universal Church, so into the particular, wherein they were born. We have also constantly maintained against the afore mentioned Persons; That the Ministers of these Churches are true Ministers, notwithstanding that exception of theirs against them, that they were ordained by Bishops, who also themselves were true Ministers in our Judgement (though we cannot acknowledge, that by divine right they were superiour to their fellow brethren, either in regard of order or jurisdiction) And that therefore the Word and Sacraments (the most essential marks of a true visible Church, according to the professed Judgement of our Divines against the Papists on the one hand, and those of the separation on the other) dispensed by these Ministers, were, and are the true Ordinances of Jesus Christ. And that hereupon our work was not (when the Presbyterian Government was appointed) to constitute Churches, but to reform them onely. And that therefore none within our bounds, except they shall renounce Christianity and their Baptism, can be deemed by us to be without, in the Apostles sense; and so therefore not within the compass and verge of our Presbyterian Government. Neither is it their not associating with us in regard of Government, that doth exempt them from censure by it, if they should be such offenders, as by the rules thereof were justly censurable. It not being a matter arbitrary, for private Persons at their own will and pleasure to exempt themselves from under that Ecclesiastical Government, that is setled by Authority. And as you know it would not have been allowed of under the former Government.

(2) And therefore whether you, and all others within our bounds, be not comprehended within our Government, according to the rules laid down in the Ordinance of Parliament above mentioned, appointing the form of Church Government to be used in the Church of *England* and *Ireland*, and therein ordaining, as hath been recited before in the first page thereof,

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and to which we refer you. (Especially considering, that all within the bounds of our several Parishes (that are no other now then formerly) even Papists and Anabaptists and other Sectaries, were under the late Prelatical Government) we leave it to you to judge. Onely if so, we wish you to consider, that then you are brought under the Government of Presbytery, not so much by us, as by the Parliament appointing this Government. And then we think you, who warn us not to contemn civil power, might well (out of respect to the Authority ordaining it, but especially considering the word Presbytery is a known Scripture expression 1 *Tim.* 4. and interpreted by sundry of the Fathers, as we do, as hath been declared before) have used a more civil expression, then to have called it a common fold, into which (it should seem) your complaint is, that you should be driven. Although Presbytery layes restraint on none, but such as being scandalous in their lives, and so contemning the Laws of God, are therefore truely and indeed the lawless Persons, that we speak of. But whereas (as you suppose) *This is our chief design in this, as in other transactions of ours, to subject all to our Government.*

We do refer our selves to our course of life past, and hope it will witness with us, to all that will judge impartially, what our designs have been in our other transactions. And as touching our design in the Paper published, whether it hath been ought but the information of the ignorant, and reformation of the scandalous, to the Glory of God and their salvation, we leave it to be judged by those, that will judge of mens intentions by what is expressed in their words and actions.

We know very well, we are charged by some, that we affect Dominion, to Lord it over the People, and to have all sorts of Persons, of what rank soever, to stoop to us. But we do openly profess, that the Government of the Church, that is committed unto men, is not Despotical, but Ministerial. That it is no Dominion, but a Ministery onely. And that the Officers, that are intrusted with it, are themselves to be subject, both in regard of their bodies and estates, to the Civil power: That by the Ordinance of God, they are appointed to

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be under, and that in their Government they have nothing to do with the bodies and estates of any Persons, but with their Souls onely. Although here we desire to enquire of you, whether, if you be indeed for the settling of any Government at all in the Church (as you profess to be) you do not think, that all should be subject to it? We cannot judge you to be so irrational, as to be for a Government, and that yet subjection to it must be denyed. And if the late Government of the Prelacy was not blamed by you, because it required subjection to it; we wish you to consider, whether upon this account you have reason to censure us. But further, whereas you tell us; *That we garnish our Government with the specious title of Christs Government, Throne and Scepter.* We wish you to consider, what in your Answer to an objection (that you frame out of our Paper) your selves do say. You there tell us. *You pray for the establishment of such Church Government, as is consonant to the will of God, and universall practice of primitive Churches. That Ecclesiastical Discipline may be exercised in the hands of them, to whom it was committed by Christ, and left by him to be transferred from hand to hand to the end of the World.* The expressions, you here use, are as high touching that Government you would have established, as any have been, that ever we have used of ours. For your prayer is, *That Ecclesiastical Discipline may be exercised in the hands of them, to whom it was committed by Christ; and left by him to be transferred from hand to hand to the end of the world.* The Government then, that you are for, must be with you, Christs Government Throne and Scepter. And why do you then condemn us, if we have used such expressions concerning our Government, till you have convinced us, that it is not such? When yet you take to your selves the Liberty to use the like language, concerning the Government you pray may be established.

But whereas you say, Presbytery is the main thing driven at here, and that however she comes ushered in with Godly pretence of sorrow for the sins and the ignorance of the times, and the duty incumbent upon us, to exercise the power that Christ hath committed to us, for edification and not for destruction, and that these are but so many waste Papers, wherein Presbytery is wrapped up

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to make it look more handsomely and pass more currantly. We do earnestly desire, That in the examination of your consciences, you would seriously consider, whether you have not both transgressed the rules of Charity in passing such hard censures upon us, and also usurped that, which belongs not to you, in making your selves judges of what fals not under your cognizance. The things you mention belonging only to be tried by your and our Master, to whom we must all stand or fall. *But we are heartily sorry, that Presbytery (which stands in no need of any painting or cover to make it look more handsomely and passe more currantly) should be accounted by you the* anguis in herba, whereof you had need to beware, it having never given that offence to any, as to merit such language.

But now you frame an objection out of our Paper, and return your Answer, professing, *That you pray for the establishment of such Church Government throughout his Highness Dominions, as is consonant to the will of God and universall practice of primitive Churches,* &c. In that you do here joyn the will of God and the universal practise of primitive Churches together, as you joyned the Word of God and the constant practise of the Catholique Church before, you seem to us, to make up the rule (whereby we must judge what Government it is, that you pray might be established) of these two, *viz.* the will of God and the universal practise of primitive Churches. Or that it is the universal practise of primitive Churches. That must be our sure guide and comment upon the Word of God, to tell us, what is his will revealed these touching Church Government and discipline. If this be your sense (as we apprehend it is) we must needs profess, that herein we greatly differ from you, as not conceiving it to be sound and orthodoxe. It being the Word of God alone, and the approved practise of the Church recorded there (whether it was the universall and constant practise of the Church or no) that is to be the onely rule to judge by in this, or any other controversies in matters of Religion. But yet admitting for the present the rule you seem to make, we should desire to know from you, what that Church Government is, which is so consonant to the will of God and universall practise of primitive Churches. For our own parts, we think it will be very hard

for you, or any others, to demonstrate out of any Records of Antiquity, what was the universall practise of primitive Churches for the whole space of the first 300. years after Christ, or the greatest part thereof (excepting so much as is left upon record in the Scriptures of the new Testament) the Monuments of Antiquity, that concerne those times (for the greatest part of them) being both imperfect, and far from shewing us, what was the universall practise of the Church then (though the practises of some Churches may be mentioned,) and likewise very questionable. At least it will not be easie to assure us, that some of those, that go under the names of the most approved Authors of those times, are neither spurious nor corrupted. And hereupon it will unavoidably follow, that we shall be left very doubtfull, what Government it is, that is most consonant to the universall and constant practise of primitive Churches for that time. But as touching the rule it self, which you seem here to lay down, we cannot close with it. We do much honour and reverence the primitive Churches; But yet we believe we owe more reverence to the Scriptures, then to judge them either imperfect or not to have light enough in themselves, for the resolving all doubts touching matters of faith or practise, except it be first resolved what was either the concurrent interpretation of the Fathers, or the universall and constant practise of the Churches of those times. Besides that admitting this for a rule, that the universall and constant practise of the primitive Churches must be that, which must assure us what is the will of God revealed in Scripture concerning the Government which he hath appointed in the Church, our faith is hereupon resolved into a most uncertain ground, and so made fallible and turned into opinion. For what monuments of Antiquity, besides the Scripture, can assure us touching the matters of fact therein contained, that they were such indeed, as they are there reported to be? the Authors of them themselves being men that were not infallibly guided by the Spirit. But yet supposing we could be infallibly assured (which yet never can be) what was the universall and constant practise of the primitive Churches, how shall that be a rule to assure us, what is most consonant to the will of God? When as we see not, especially

especially in such matters, as are not absolutely necessary to salvation, but that the universall practise of the Churches might in some things be dissonant to the will of God revealed in Scriptures. And so the universall practise of primitive Churches can be no certain rule to judge by, what Church Government is most consonant to the will of God revealed in his Word. We know there are corruptions in the best of men: There was such hot contention betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as caused them to part asunder. *Peter* so failed in his practise, as that though before some came from *James*, he did eat with the Gentils, yet when they were come he withdrew himself, fearing them of the Circumcision. And hereupon not only other Jews dissembled with him, but *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation. Whence it's clear, that the examples of the best men even in those things, wherein they went contrary to the rule of Gods Word, are of a spreading nature, and the better the Persons, that give the bad example, are, the greater the danger of the more universall leavening. Nay we finde, that not only some few Apostolicall men had their failings, but even Apostolicall primitive Churches did, in the very face of the Apostles, they being yet alive, make great defection, both in regard of opinions and practises. As from the examples of the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and the Churches of *Asia* is manifest. The Apostle also tels us, that even in his time, the mystery of iniquity began to work: And in after times we know, how the Doctrine was corrupted: what gross superstition crept into the Church: what domination was striven for amongst the Pastors and Bishops of the Churches. Till at length Antichrist was got up into his seat, unto which height yet he came not all at once, but by steps and degrees. Besides it is of fresh remembrance, that notwithstanding the reformation happily brought about in our own Church in regard of Doctrine and worship, after those dismall *Marian* times, yet the corruption, in regard of Government continued such, during the time of the late Prelacy (which yet was taken away in other reformed Churches) that the Pastors were deprived of that power of rule, that our Church acknowledgeth did belong to them of right; and which did

Even as a Generall Councill is self is subject to errour.

Gal. 2.

anciently belong to them; however the exercise thereof did after grow into a long disuse, as hath been shewed before. And therefore when we consider on the one hand, that the superiority, which the Bishop obtained at the first above the Presbyter in the ancient Church (and which was rather obtained *consuetudine Ecclesiæ* then by Divine right) did at the length grow to that height, that the Pastors were spoiled of all power of rule: so we cannot much wonder on the other hand, that the ruling Elder was quite turned out of doors; For the proof of the being and exercise of whose office in the purer times, there are notwithstanding produced testimonies of the ancients, by Divines both at home and abroad, that have written about that subject, and to which we do therein refer you: As there do remain some footsteps and shadow of their office in the Church-wardens and Sides-men even to this day. And so upon the whole, the premisses considered, and that we are commanded not to follow a multitude to do evill (though it were of the best of men) and that therefore the examples and practises, though it were of whole Churches, are to be no farther a rule for us, then they follow Christ, and as their examples be approved of in the Word of Christ, notwithstanding the universality and long continuedness of such practises. Whereas you say, *that you pray for the establishment of such Church Government, as is consonant to the will of God and universall practise of primitive Churches*; we believe you might cut the matter a great deal shorter, and say, That you are for the establishing of that Government, that is most consonant to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures, and that the Word of God alone (and on which onely Faith must be built, and into which at last be resolved, when other records of Antiquity, that yet are not so ancient, as it is, have been search't into never so much) shall determine what that is, and so those wearisome and endless disputes, about what is the universall and constant practise of primitive Churches (and which if it could be found out in any good measure of probability for the first 300. years after Christ, could never yet be so farr issued, as to be a sure bottom, whereon our faith may safely rest) may be cut off. It being a most certain rule, and especially in matters of faith, that

that the *Fallum* is not to prescribe against the *Jus*; The *Practice* against the *Right* or what ought to be done. And it being out of all question the safest course for all, to bring all doctrine and practices to the sure and infallible Standard and Touchstone, the Word of God alone. And after you have more seriously weighed the matter, and remember how you professe, that in the matters you propose in your Paper, *You rest not in the Judgment or determination of any general Councel of the Eastern or Western Churches, determining contrary, to what you are perswaded is so fully warranted in the Word of God, as well as by the constant practice of the Catholick Church*; (although what that was, were more likely to be resolved by a general Councel then by your selves) the proposal of having the Word of God alone to be the Judg of the Controversie about Church-Government, cannot (wee think) in reason be deny'd by you.

And wee with you shall heartily pray, That the Church-Government, which is most consonant to the will of God revealed in Scriptures, might be established in these Lands. Although wee must also professe, that wee believe, that that Government, which is established by Authority, and which wee exercise, is, for the substantials of it, this Government, & which wee judg also to be most consonant to the practice of the primitive Churches in the purest times. And therefore as there was some entrance made by the late Parliament, in regard of establishing this Government by Ordinances, as the Church-Government of these Nations: And as to the putting those Ordinances in execution, there hath been some beginning in the Province of *London*, the Province of this County, and in some other places throughout the Land: So when there shall be the opportunity offered, wee shall not be wanting by petitioning or otherwayes to use our best endeavors, that it may be fully settled throughout these Lands. That so wee may not, as to Government in the Church, any longer continue as a City without walls, and a Vineyard without an hedg, and so (to the undoing of our posterity) endanger Religion to be quite lost. And upon which consideration wee do earnestly desire, that all conscientious and moderate spirited men throughout the Land, though of different principles, whether of the Episcopal or Congregational way,

would